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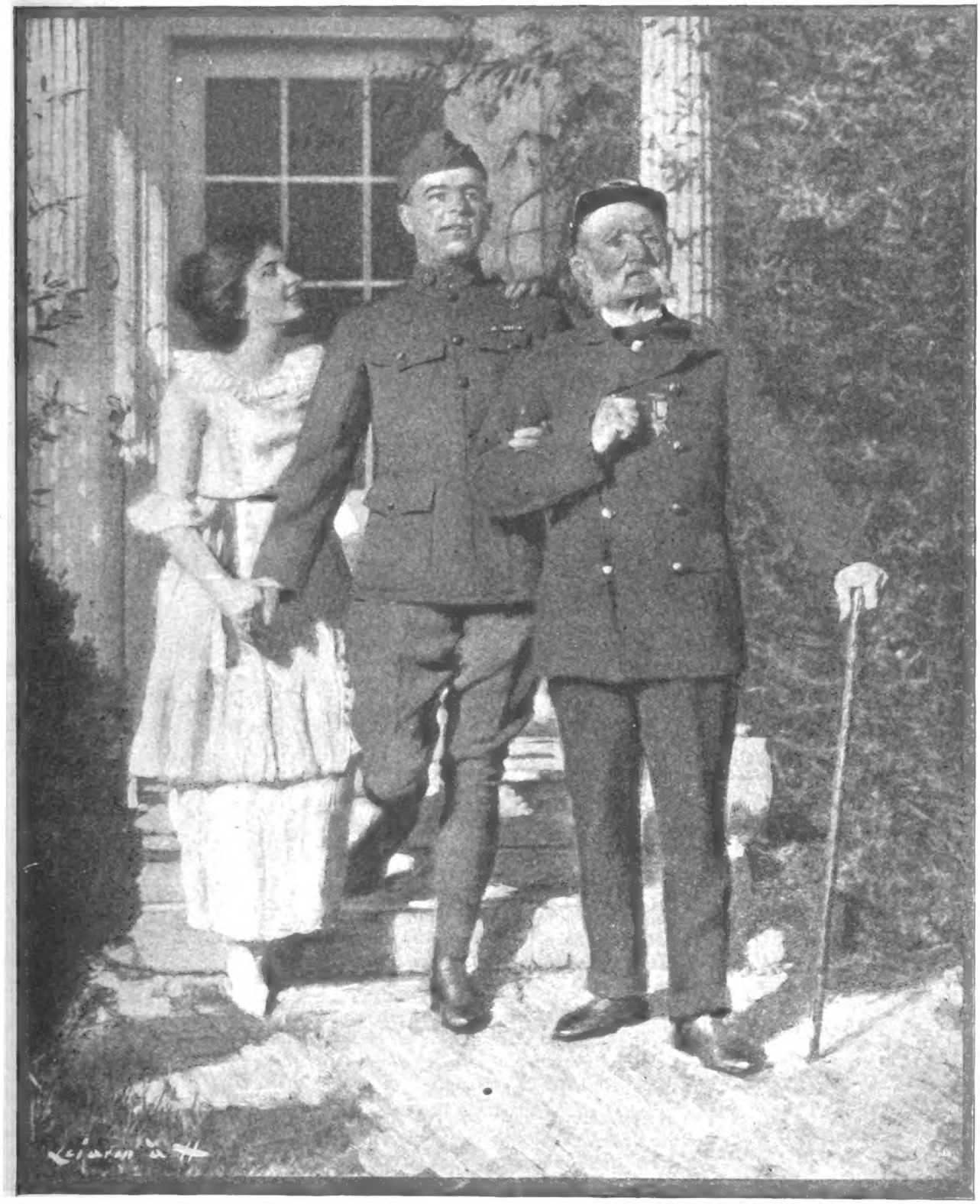

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Lu Kik, who had made a landing some moments ahead, had helpers ready, but they carried a dead man up to the bungalow.

King Caliban's Town

A Two-Part Story — Part I

By Will Levington Comfort

ONCE when Hazlitt was abroad after nightfall, rambling alone among the fruit-sellers' torches close to the harbor-front in Hongkong, there appeared all at once, around a dark corner, a huge eunuch with a marvelous maid upon his shoulders. She was Chinese and dressed in lustrous brocades and jewels, and her face, held high above the flare of the torches, seemed made of cool blue moonlight, and there was that memorable beauty upon it for Hazlitt's eyes which contained the best of the far past and intimated grander ages of the Orient still to come.

It was just a passing, on one of his very first nights in China; but he was in the mood to make the most of it. There were few days in the next three years when the picture did not come before his eyes, though everything possible happened to kill romance and break dreams and render the East level and sordid for his eyes. It never occurred to him to speak of the incident. Many white men he coursed with would have missed the thing Hazlitt saw, even if he had been able to tell it all. Other white men would have replied in kind and told what they had seen of the same nature, and exactly what was about to happen to that particular Chinese maid.

Hazlitt didn't want to hear what would happen to her. At best, it was less than his own pictured possibilities. All life was like that. The fact was, he carried a secret

CHARACTERS

"Caliban"—A wily Malay king

Monte—His fat son

Hazlitt—An American, on a neighboring island

Lu Kik—Hazlitt's perfect cook, imperfectly forested

Martha Penniman—An English girl in strange trouble

***and* Mr. Comfort, author of "The "Yellow Lord," and well known for his richly colored stories of the Orient.**

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ache most of the time because of the dulness of life. It was less than the story of human days as he would have written it. He had come out to meet the Far East with some courage and humor and cheer, expecting it to drift before his eyes like a pageant, but it didn't. The subtleties cleared too quickly, and were less than he could imagine. The high lights had merely a surface dazzle; the shadows lacked depth and were dulled with gray.

All of which wouldn't be remotely recognized as a picture of Murray Hazlitt, American, such as men saw. A touch of his soul perhaps; at best, a vague background against which a smooth astute hemp-buyer went his way for five months of the year by sail and steam among the islands from the Paloman group north to Luzon.

THERE were curiously deceptive phases to the young man. You would think he was delicate to see his frail figure and the face on shipboard—eyes covered forward and side by large amber-tinted Indian spectacles—loose lolling movements of his limbs. The spectacles were for sun-glare only and covered eyes with deep-blue glints of humor and vitality; the lazy inclination of his figure was merely a foil for occasional flashes of speed that might be expected of a tennis champion. Moreover, he moved among the islands with large profit to the Asiatic Cordage Company at Hongkong. None of the company buyers did better among the island plantations, nor succeeded so well, perhaps, in contracting fields year in and year out. It isn't all in buying close. A good man must buy close and come again.

Don't forget that you have the advantage of all Hazlitt's associates in the matter of that Chinese maid, with eyes and face lit with a moonlight of her own beauty. Most of us carry a dream until the world gets too dreary and protracted. Most of us keep it covered like a secret sin, but toward the end, as we begin to review the procession instead of marching in it, we learn that the dream was one of the best things we had to begin with.

During the seven quiet months of the year, Hazlitt lived alone on the west shore of Little Mustaree, a half-jungle isle of the Paloman group, where he had picked up a plantation of his own, and where he was in danger of becoming saturated with leisure and sunlight and easy living. Except for an occasional day or two's sailing in his fancy little craft *Black Magic*, there was nothing to keep him fit in body or mind. Even in this sort of sailing, a man falls so easily into the endless slide and heave of the long lazy rollers of the South Pacific. His steady fight was not to become soft with luxuries.

Most meat-fed Northerners would not have called strong feeding this fruity richness to which Hazlitt was accustomed, and yet Lu Kik, the Chinese who kept his establishment, was so consummately an artist that the American was beginning to feel overnourished on just what the islands furnished, not to forget the little bayous of multicolored fish. Very often of late the young white man had come to evil terms with his own character, and pictured himself presently sending to Manila or Singapore for a rocking-chair with a long incline and a cushioned head-rest. On this particular day he whimsically considered firing Lu Kik Mon.

"I tell you, Lu," he observed, reflecting on a marvelous compote the Chino had unearthed for tiffin from his oven underground, "it's back to Canton for you. I move out at sea for a few days, and get my arteries all salt-crusted, and then soften to a sybarite here under your hands. These contrasts are killing. Nobody could stand it."

"I see," Lu Kik answered, pouring out a vinous orange punch into a tall frosted glass.

Hazlitt surveyed the drink. It was of a tea-rose tint, a sort of blend of yellow and pink. Less than an hour before, Lu Kik had brought a deep-green one. An hour hence, tea would be served. Dinner, always a mystery until the gong struck, was doubtless now in complicated preparation in the earth ovens. Tiffin as observed was a delicate memory. There had been the regular breakfast at nine, and what the Hindus call *choti hazri* when he was first called.

Lu Kik had not really come from Canton, at least not recently. Though he often spoke of his home in China and certain small children, he had not been over to the mainland within the memory of foreigners of the Paloman group. Lu was known in Mortuagas, but had a curious fondness for Little Mustaree, certain impenetrable jungle stretches of which he knew better than any of the natives. It was this Chinese who had brought Hazlitt to the rich little island and told him first of the advantages of the plantation which he had later bought.

LU'S single fault, so far as Hazlitt had been able to discover in three years, was an occasional opium debauch. He had a hiding-place of his own in the jungle for these relaxations, requiring silence and security from interruption for his dreams. No native knew his secret, but the astonishing thing was that he had recently told the American, and led him to a half-submerged stone ruin, utterly past finding out, and which Hazlitt would have difficulty in finding a second time. Lu Kik explained that some morning he might not appear at the bungalow, and that his body would be found in the jungle hiding-place. It must be sent with certain other effects back to China. Hazlitt had laughingly called the refuge a "bear pit."

"I don't know why you want to stick to me, anyway," Hazlitt resumed. "You've been following me cat-footed for three years, and I've had war on most of the time to keep from melting down into a barefooted sot."

"I see," said Lu Kik.

"All over the islands they want you. Beakins, of Limpan, said he'd exchange his whole household for one Chinaman half so good as you."

Lu Kik vanished into the brown shadows of the bungalow and emerged with a lacquered tobacco-tray. He was used to hearing Hazlitt talk. The American sank back in his chair, pushing the tray away.

"I'll light one of my own, thanks," he said, producing a case.

"You dine alone?" Lu Kik asked.

Yes, he was dining alone.

The Chinese nodded and disappeared to his own department. Hazlitt squinted seaward where the sun was going down. The Chinese had left him restless. It was about dining alone. Only twice in the last three months Hazlitt had done other than dine alone, yet Lu Kik rarely failed to ask the question once a day. Those two times Marshall Penniman, the English trader at Mortuagas, eighteen miles away, had sailed over for a call with his daughter. Dinner had been a severe affair on those occasions. Martha Penniman was the only white girl Hazlitt had seen for many tiresome weeks, and she was white in any company, but the old trader, her father, was formal and austere in a social way as he was in business, and that was talk of the archipelago.

Mortuagas was the most important port of the Paloman Islands—"King Caliban's town," the South Sea men called it. Hazlitt was in and out of there often in the busy season, but he always fancied that Penniman didn't care for his ways. There had been an afternoon or two with Martha Penniman at her house—nothing to remember about them except that they found a world to laugh at together, and yet Hazlitt didn't forget. They hadn't laughed so well in his own bungalow with her father a difficult third, yet afterward Hazlitt sometimes looked at the place where she sat, and wished her back again.

Just now he decided not to dine alone. He told Lu Kik to draw the dinner fires and come along away for a sail. Lu's three serving-boys were to keep house alone.

"Come quickly before the wind dies down," Hazlitt added.

"Plenty win'," said Lu Kik, "but no win' come back."

The American had almost forgotten that he had found his perfect servant in little lost Mortuagas, of all places in the world to find anything good—"King Caliban's town"—inert, iniquitous, compact.

The sun went down like a red sugar bowl. Hazlitt hadn't figured just what he would do in Mortuagas—possibly play a game of billiards with King Caliban's son, Monte. Marsh Penniman might not thank him to call in the evening without being formally urged; still the American was a bit breathless at the thought of seeing Martha so soon. *Black Magic* was at her toppiest under the full steady shove of the breeze. Half-way across the passage through the amethyst dusk Hazlitt at length saw another small craft headed for them, but limp and helpless as a pinned butterfly.

HAZLITT laughed aloud. It was Penniman and his daughter coming to him. But before the two boats were athwart the American was sorry he had laughed. She was trying to smile, but the face was stricken, and the old English trader was leaning back in the stern, apparently helpless.

"It was good of you to come," she said breathlessly. "We had to steal away. My father is badly wounded."

Hazlitt now saw that the old trader could not speak—that he might not speak again. He left Lu Kik with *Black Magic* and joined them in the trader's boat. It was a two hours' drag back to Mustaree, a teasing tacking torture, before they passed the outer rocks. Hazlitt poled in the rest of the way. Lu Kik, who had made a landing some moments ahead, had helpers ready, but they carried a dead man up to the bungalow.

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II

THERE had been few words on the way over. What had happened was as vague as it was ugly in Hazlitt's mind. He had taken Martha in to the lamplight, but she would not sit down.

"I can not stay here—I can not talk indoors!"

"You'll know if there is anything necessary for me to be told at once. If there isn't, don't try now," he told her.

"You must know what there is to know," she said.

They were walking down on the shore—the night breathless even by the water, the little harbor quiet as an inland lake.

"Old Caliban has come to my father every morning for a week," she was saying. "Most of the natives follow his orders blindly. Each day my father has asked me to come over here to you, but I would not leave him. I know nothing of the nature of his discussions with Caliban. Their voices were always low, but each day my father's eyes were more fearful. He begged me to leave secretly—to come to you—not for me to tarry here, but to have you send me to Singapore or Manila."

This was extraordinary to Hazlitt. Penniman was a strange man, the wisdom of whose dealings was frequently not apparent until afterward. He had lived long in Mortuagas, a hotbed of antagonistic forces, yet had succeeded until the time of the war in dealing with French and German and English without a serious breach for years. Moreover, he had kept Mortuagas in something like integration on a commercial basis, against the whims and greeds of the foxy old chief whose native name was enough like "Caliban" to have merged into that name for foreign use.

IT WAS declared from all angles that no one but Penniman could have handled so well the situation at Mortuagas. Copra, pearls, tea and hemp, the products of half a hundred of the finest bamboo-carvers in the Orient—all these had to be given to the world, first through Caliban, and then through the resident trader. The old chief's wealth was a subject for endless conjectures; folds on folds of mystery and iniquity were said to be active in his palace; certainly his little island city, usually spoken of as "Mort," was a budding Bagdad for ways of darkness that loved darkness for its own sake, and cared not to lead otherwise.

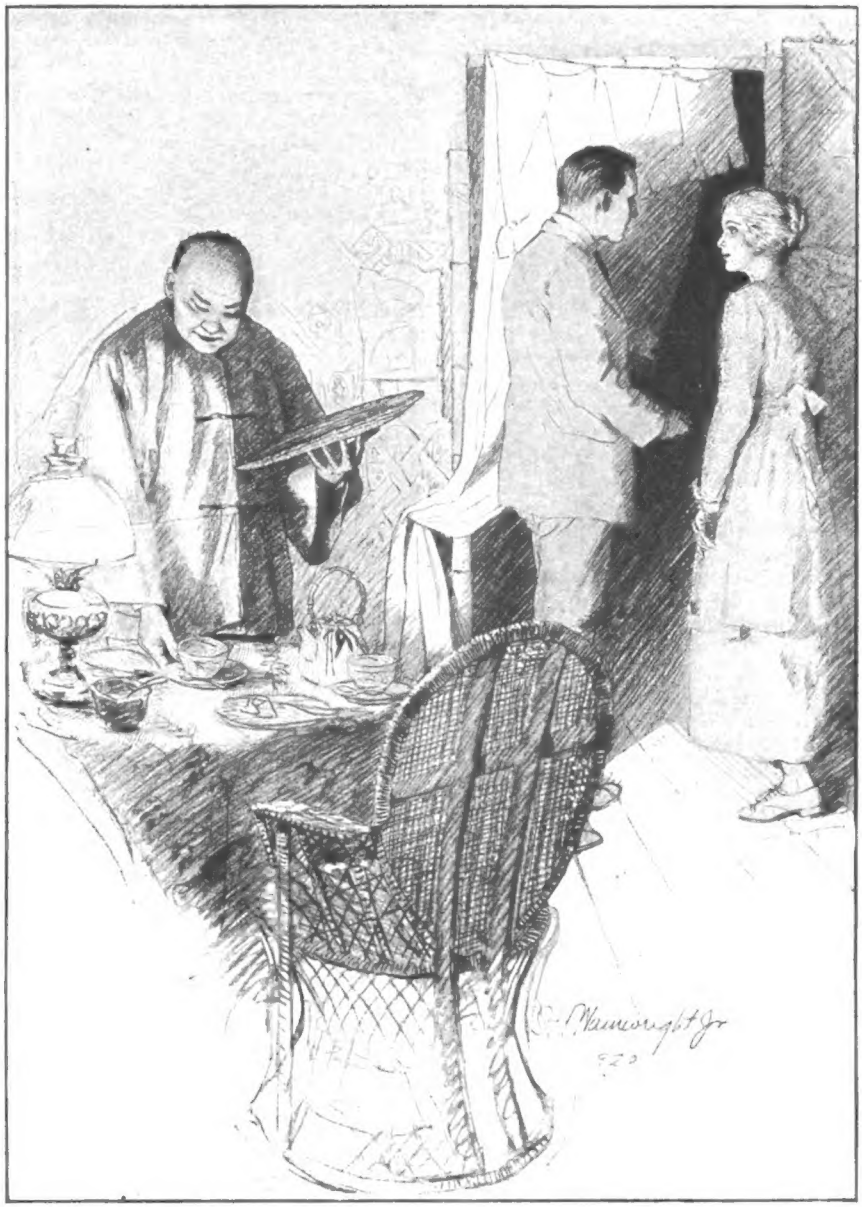
Hazlitt's astonishment did not lessen that Penniman had thought of him in the mysterious stress of his daughter; still it was known that the English trader was not well liked by the few foreigners in Mortuagas.

"But what happened to your father?" Hazlitt asked.

"I do not know. We had just had tea, and I left him below in the library. I heard his call to me. He did not cry out in fright; it was not like alarm, only his steady call to me. I found him unable to speak. By all his gestures and movements he was in a passion to get me away from Mort—to have me come to you."

"What could happen to hurt you?"

"I think it has to do with Caliban's son," she answered. "I can not think of anything else. Caliban has not been dealing as usual through my father for many weeks; his go-downs are full of products which he will not dispose of. He wanted that which my father could not grant."



She was different this night—older, lovelier, too; a woman, not a girl.

Thick darkness settled in Hazlitt's mind. The malignant essence of the islands revealed itself to him now for the first time. He would never forget the emptiness nor the weary effort of Martha Penniman's voice. But if she were the center of attraction, and wanted by Caliban as a present for his college-colored son, Monte, why had she been allowed to escape from Mort?

"Oh, come in, Miss Penniman, and rest! I'll show you a quiet room," he said at last. "You've tried so hard to tell me, yet there is nothing you can tell to-night. I see that."

She looked at him gratefully. There was no moon. The stars seemed very pale and far, and yet there was a faint mist somehow about her face that made the features clearer, touching something deep in Hazlitt's heart which his mind did not bring to the surface. He felt her arm tremble.

"I don't like the thought of a house. I don't know what's the matter," she added slowly. "It must be the way my father's voice sounded through the rooms this afternoon when he called so steadily."

"We'll have tea or something. There is dinner waiting. Oh, I know you won't feel like it, but it will do you good," he urged. "It all looks grisly and bewildering, but we'll get head and tail out of it. I'm sorry for your pain. I'd like to take it somehow."

HE HAD not been like this with her before. They were strange with each other. In the other times they had done little else but laugh together when alone. Her whole life had been spent with her father in the islands, except for two or three years of school work in Europe and the States. Hazlitt remembered thinking of her after the first meeting as a "little white thing." All the rest were dark faces in this island world. She was different this night—older, lovelier, too; wiser, deeper, a woman, not a girl.

He showed her the place she was to sleep. Lu Kik was putting on the dinner things. Hazlitt waited in the dining-room for her to come. The words came back, "I think it has to do with Caliban's son." A queer hard look came to Hazlitt's eyes—queer because there was a reservation

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about it. He knew the big boy called Monte—a fat brown chap, rather remarkable animal, spoiled as an Indian prince, and the doting dream of his father. The queer element to the American was that Monte had an unmistakable devotion for him, Hazlitt. College hadn't changed the primitive Malay heart, but had put on most of the Americanisms that Americans care to forget. College really hadn't touched Monte's vapory, perverted mind, but had uncovered in certain directions a rather marvelous athlete in the fat boy.

Martha Penniman tried bravely to eat, but Hazlitt knew that it would be merciful to let her go. He walked the rooms alone for an hour or two after she had left. It was as if connection were cut off between them, heart and mind moving full-tilt in different directions, a pain about it. He remembered the laughing girl at Mort and the white face of the woman down on the shore to-night. Her voice seemed still in the room; at times her hands seemed still on his arm. He had found it difficult to hold in mind that she had lost her father this day. She made so little of the usual forms of grief, as if it were something entirely her own and she was doing her best to keep it so.

A suspicion of some marvelous courage about her dawned upon his mind; something that only great events or rare vision would bring out. Moreover, there was something so indescribably dear about her, and about having her here, that made this night different from all the nights that had gone.

He didn't sleep for hours, and awakened early. Lu Kik was about his work and looked pallid and drawn. Hazlitt kept very still about the house, not wishing to disturb his guest; glad at first as an hour passed, that she did not appear, thinking she must be resting. The morning became full; he could wait no longer and sent one of Lu Kik's boys to knock at her door.

There was no answer. Something of the truth came to the American before the Chinese boy's second knock. He hurried in. She had been taken out of the low open window. There were prints of many bare feet among the palm-fronds outside.

III

NOTHING had ever hit him like this. It became momentarily harder to bear. His utter worthlessness as a guardian began as a sort of basic drumming misery. The very death-agonies of poor "Marsh" Penniman had been focalized upon his daughter's reaching this house. In the first darkness she had been whipped away into a vortex of unnamable dangers. He recalled the unusual pallor of exhaustion in Lu Kik's face and became sick with suspicion. Lu Kik had come from Mortuagas. Hazlitt went into his own quarters and shut the door.

All his loose lazy days ran before him. He really had gripped nothing heartily. Even the first two afternoons with Martha Penniman they had found only the world to laugh at between them. Everything humorous when they had been together; and last night when all that was changed and the *real* was called, if ever in his life, he had sent her off to bed like a polite host. He had walked the floor outside thinking what her white face had meant to him—to him, Murray Hazlitt, personally—down on the shore, and the misty light about it.

At least he was now shocked awake. Mortuagas and the clustering points of the Paloman archipelago were suddenly sinister; the comic-opera aspect of old Caliban, his palace, his city and his son, dissipated utterly. Instead, was a black and guileful Mohammedan with hundreds of men and a rich island's wealth behind him—a Malay chief accustomed to getting what he wanted, living in a walled palace, in a city practically his own and sumptuous in evil, as any teller of tales might care to revel in. In the palace was a purdah, long the subject of whimsical speculation. It might have been under the Pacific for all the foreigners had learned in fifty years. Now her words came back: "I think it had something to do with Caliban's son."

Hazlitt strode out of the room and caught Lu Kik by the shoulders. "What do you know about this?" he asked.

"No can tell."

"You heard no sound last night?"

"No soun'—no soun' las' night."

Hazlitt laughed, but it was from bitterness deep within. Nothing could be gained roughing it with Lu Kik. One does not deal with an Oriental in that way. If three years had not taught him whether this Chinese were white or black inside, he was not apt to force the truth now in a moment of imperiousness.

"Have you asked your yellow boys?"

"No."

"Do that now, Lu," Hazlitt said quietly. "We're in trouble. You and I must stand together. Ask question from house-boys, then see what natives know. Forget kitchen to-day—I say forget."

"I see."

FROM the palm-fronds at the low window of the room Martha Penniman had occupied for a little time tracks of bare feet led to the sea. The tide was in now, but a boat had doubtless landed from Mortuagas. Color surged up in Hazlitt's face. None but Caliban's orders had worked here. Caliban had acted quickly. But why had she been so silent and why had Caliban permitted her to leave Mort?

They couldn't have carried her away sleeping.

They couldn't have surprised her before she could utter a single sound. He hadn't been fifty feet away; most of the night he had been unable to sleep. Caliban was used to getting what he wanted. If he wanted this white girl for his son, to bring the blood of the Aryan world to his sorry Malay line—Hazlitt's throat tightened—certainly Caliban had made a good start.

For the first time in his life the white man realized he was alone. The need of one single human being to stand by came over him like a surge. If he could only be sure of Lu Kik! Hazlitt's face looked gray and haggard under the tan. His lips moved. "And talk about being alone," he muttered, as he thought of Martha Penniman and the walled palace by the sea.

Lu Kik's soft shuffle was now heard outside.

"What did you find out?" Hazlitt asked.

"House-boy know nothing—one, two, three all sleep."

Lu inclined his face to his right palm, raised his eyebrows and dropped his smoothed lids to indicate deep bylo.

"And the natives?"

"No hear. Natives eat snake by roas'-fire. Sleep all day."

Lu meant that the natives of Little Mustaree had indulged in a big roast the night before, and would sleep the clock around. He had not intended to convey that they ate snake-meat, but rather that they had gorged as snakes do.

"How did you miss all this, Lu?"

"Alle-same, Mister Hazli'. No hear."

One couldn't get past that. Lu added shamelessly, "Also little Looie sleep by smoke-smoke."

No more to be said on that. An opium relaxation was enough to leave the best servant aged and pallid.

"What do you think happened to Miss Penniman, Lu?"

"Miss Pennima'—she take to purdah."

"Carried away to purdah?"

Lu bowed.

"Whose?"

"King Caliban."

Hazlitt cleared his throat. "For himself?"

Lu smiled familiarly at life at large, signifying that a harem was a mere matter of vanity to old Caliban in his wiser years.

"But for whom?"

"Present for Monte-boy."

THIS was unexpected. Lu Kik rarely gossiped. It tallied exactly with Hazlitt's idea, but was a good deal uglier coming flat like this from his servant. Hazlitt stood still in the room looking at the wall. If there were guile in the Oriental's heart, it was deeper and more dangerous than he thought. The American was crushed with doubt. His need for this one yellow man was past words. He spoke after a minute.

"You think Caliban killed Marsh Penniman to get Miss Martha?"

"No kill all for that."

"For what, Lu?"

"Marsh Pennima' get in way."

"In the way of Caliban?"

"In way of trade monee, in way of trade goods. Marsh Pennima' try to be king. King Caliban get tired."

Again Hazlitt's surprise was not at the news, but that his Chinese was so versed in these affairs. Penniman's honest but astute method had long narrowed the margins of the island leader.

"Marsh Pennima' no go one way; Caliban take 'nother way," Lu added explicitly.

"But the daughter——"

"Monte want her."

"Then it was Monte, and not the father, who was back of the silent party that landed here last night?"

Lu shook his head wearily. "Monte boy no push big cart."

Hazlitt saw that Miss Penniman played but a secondary part in Caliban's scheme, according to Lu Kik; that the Malay's main business was to do away with her father. Also Hazlitt saw that Lu had small idea of Monte's acumen or prowess.

"But if Caliban wanted the daughter at all, why did he let her get away from Mort yesterday? Why did he let her get to sea with her father?"

"No want native-men to think; no want foreign-men to see. No like wi' daylight."

"You mean he would rather take a chance on following her here than to detain her in his own city?"

Lu bowed. "Sure, safe way come here."

"It certainly proved so," Hazlitt said softly. "Thanks, Lu. I'm going over to Mort."

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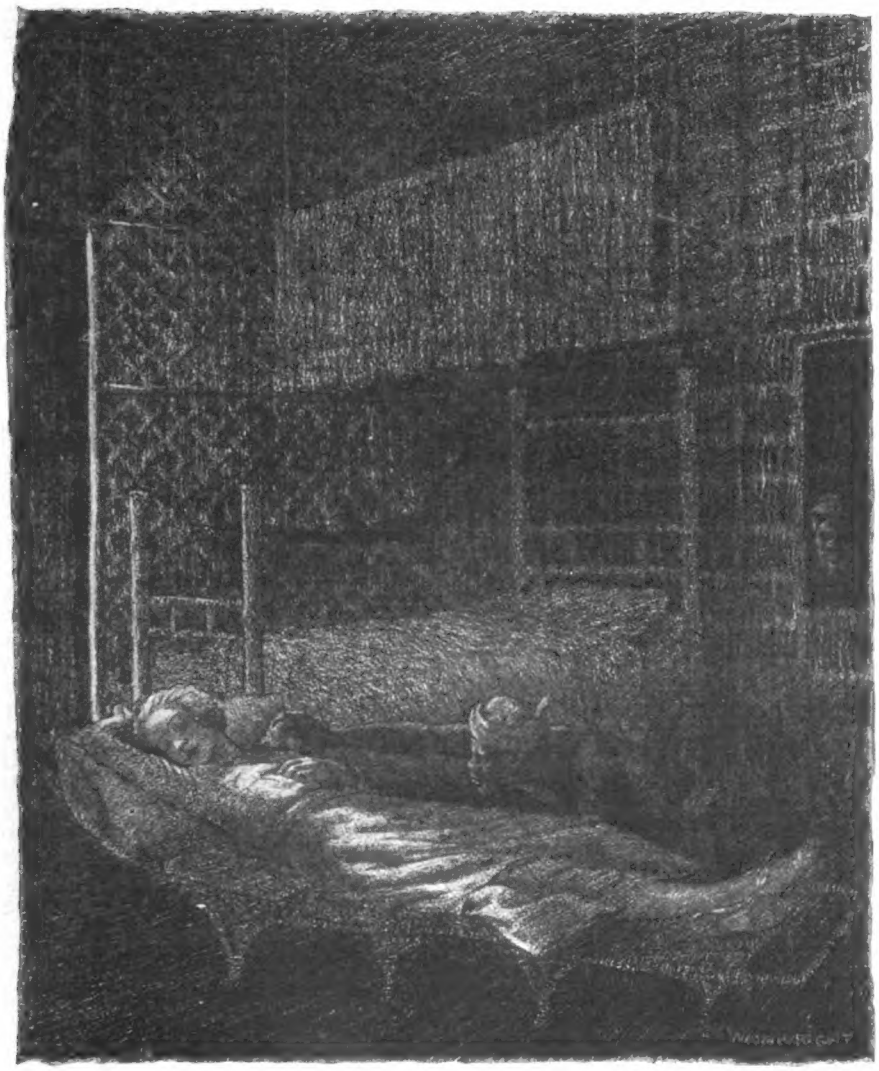

In the first darkness she had been whipped away into a vortex of unnamable dangers

The Oriental salaamed, then held out a long-nailed left hand. "You go Mort. You no come back to-ni'." Lu looked sick and sad.

"I count on being back to-night. Why not?"

"No find Miss Pennima'. No come back."

"I may have a little luck, Lu."

"Old Chino know. Little Looie know. Little Looie no go home China. Go way down."

He made the sign of his body being deeply buried.

"Not so bad as that."

"Little Looie no go home China; three babies no more see; much safe monee, no more spend."

Lu appeared to be faintly sympathetic with his own fate and its details unfolding now in mind.

"Stick to me—I'll see you home safe," Hazlitt said.

"Little Looie stick al' li'. Catfoot three years. Stick al' li'. Stick in ground."

"Don't be a morgue, Lu. Stand by."

"So long," said Lu.

Hazlitt had a sudden inner prompting to take the yellow man along. If Lu Kik were to throw him in a crisis, it were better to know at once.

IV

TWO facts loomed. Though there had been no sound from Martha Penniman, Hazlitt was certain that old Caliban had no use for a dead girl; second, action and not words must bring out the status of Lu Kik, the golden chef. Hazlitt realized that he must play the game alone until events proved that he had a friend or an enemy in the old Chinese; must play the game alone, for that matter, against the whole archipelago.

They stocked the little yacht and were at sea by mid-forenoon. Three hours later the Chinese made fast at the stone steps of the water-front and the American went alone up into the city. Within ten minutes he felt the light touch of a very thick and heavy hand. This was the queerest thing about Monte Caliban. His movements were light as a child's, his body that of a stalled ox. At least two, possibly three, Hazlitts might have been belted together in young Monte's girth, and yet his ankles had an actual twinkle when he danced or played. At tennis and billiards and high-diving there was a careless grace about this barrel of a boy that one never forgot, and the source of charm was real, because he hadn't the remotest sense of the peculiarity of his performance.

His agility of body was altogether of an animal sort and there was not, so far as any one knew, the remotest trace of moral stiffening in his make-up. In fact, he was a study of shallowness, and the feeling about him warned one instantly of some close-to-the-surface perversion. Monte was quite at the mercy of his attachment for Hazlitt, who possibly represented to him all that he had known and missed out of Europe and the States. Still it was like dealing with a fine but treacherous cat creature to play with Caliban's son, and the American invariably found himself in trouble with others, as well as his own unobtrusive standards of life, after a day with the old chief's pride and heir.

Hazlitt winced under the hand now, and disliked himself because the feeling was so strong. He was always joined in Mortuagas like this. No matter from what angle of the water-front he entered, rarely ten minutes passed before Monte found him. It was as if the whole town were on the watch, and yet the American had not so far asked young Caliban over to Mustaree.

"Bill'ards?" Monte asked, holding up his right hand and softly turning the wrist.

"Not now, Monte."

"Tennis?"

"I can't, to-day."

"Have tiffin—come now."

HAZLITT had a queer impulse to accept. There was no place fit to eat, from Monte's standpoint, other than his father's house, and Hazlitt, who had hated the establishment formerly, suddenly wanted to go to the palace now. Monte's carriage was following, as they talked together. They were driven up the hill presently to the great walled grounds overlooking the sea. Hazlitt spoke of the death of "Marsh" Penniman.

"Hah, I did not know. My father will be sad to hear."

It did not sound or appear as if there could be guile in the young man's head. The carriage was sickly with perfume to Hazlitt, and fanned an inner flame.

"My father knew that he had gone to sea, but not that he die."

Hazlitt did not answer.

"My father and he were old friends," Monte went on. "We are seriously hurt to hear."

Monte's voice was low and easy. He seemed full of pleasure to have found Hazlitt again. His pleasure was always used in the present never as an anticipation. He sprawled in the cushions, breathed audibly and talked—life to him a circle of soft sensations. Most of the things which white men would have considered vices were sort of rhythmically rooted in his being. He used life to the full, knowing no reactions nor stirrings to attainment. Hazlitt possibly represented the only object of which he could not have all he wanted.

Monte had had a set of tennis-courts made in the palace-grounds when he returned from college. It was one of Hazlitt's queerest sensations the first time he played the game with young Caliban. The vast bulk of a boy spun and bowled across the turf—astonishing speed, no particular waste effort about it, except in empty laughter.

Tiffin in the soft dusks of a hall walled with peacock feathers. In the open entrance an elephant's hide hung from the ceiling. It was tied like a great bag and filled with smaller leather bags containing the essential oils of the world which breathed different perfumes with every breeze. Hazlitt had never been in this part of the palace before, and saw they had come because it was cooler than outdoors. Monte explained that the elephant bag had hung in the home of his fathers for hundreds of

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years. Every first-born son of the line who was to take the place of his father as chief opened the bag when he became a man and restored some of the oils. If he had been a good boy and the people found no fault with him, the elder son was allowed to bring some oil of the sacred lotus.

"Have you been a good boy, Monte?"

"Hah, yes. The people have no fault with me. They say I am good if not wise. My father is both good and wise."

Hazlitt held tight his mirth. Some might have escaped in the glance of his eye, yet no shaft ever penetrated. Monte had even forgotten what he said. A servant came with a message to the boy.

"It is from my father," Monte said. "He wishes to see you to-morrow at ten. You will stay with me until you see my father?"

"I had not planned to be in Mortuagas to-morrow. Can he not see me now after tiffin?"

"Oh, no," Monte said. "But I can see you any time."

Hope was hard to grip in this atmosphere; even American luck seemed hopeless against the impressiveness of life here. Still Hazlitt sought doggedly to keep together the vestiges of his power to cope alone for Martha Penniman. Possibly because he sought so well in the midst of secret and subtle forces, a thought came to him at this moment. It was sheerest audacity. Monte's voice was still a soft drawl in his ears. Hazlitt had not heard the recent words.

"OH, I say, Monte," he interrupted, "I might come to-morrow, but I must go back to Mustaree to-night. Perhaps you would make the sail with me, and we'll have supper together."

"Hah—pleased," said Monte.

A minute later he bent forward whispering: "But we—do not tell. My father would not let me go without servants."

Tiffin—a long and elaborate experience in which Hazlitt studied the open parts of the establishment in which Martha Penniman doubtless was held. One never saw the women in this house. He had a curiously freshened interest in the creature across the table. Something of the savage was left in the younger Caliban's dining countenance—something of the primitive, too, that college life had not cast out—hearty manners of assimilation which suggested still more remote coral strands to Hazlitt's fancy and made the perfect flannels and flowing scarf markedly out of place. But Monte was at home. There was something in his bearing toward his father within these walls that Hazlitt had not noted outside. All contacts of the Western world had failed to change the boy's attitude toward old King Caliban, at least within the palace grounds.

MONTE sailed a boat, as he did other physical things, with deftness and grace. The American, much at sea, often his own pilot, learned certain niceties of handling his most familiar craft that afternoon, but all the time there was a drum of deep thinking in his head. It was not until supper that he decided just how to put in action the thing that had come. Lu Kik had served and served again. Hazlitt sent him away and turned to his guest.

"Monte, I haven't a thing against you. You won't like it, but I've got to keep you here in Mustaree."

The big face before him turned blue-sick. It wasn't like a boy or a man, but like an imbecile. It took Hazlitt by the throat for an instant; then filled him with irritation rather than pity.

"Oh, come now, Monte, I'm not going to kill you. You've been so square and decent, I have to tell you exactly what I'm going to do——"

"You won't shut me up here and go away? You won't leave me shut up alone and go away?"

He was like a child who had been terribly punished and threatened with the same punishment again. The effect upon Hazlitt was intolerable. Plait and polish disappeared as if they had never been even in the surface habit or manner of the boy. It wasn't good honest savage that was left, that was the startling part.

"You won't be left alone too long, Monte. Get a grip on yourself. It's a game, man. You're all the stake I have to play with. It may not take long; that just depends on how much your father cares for you——"

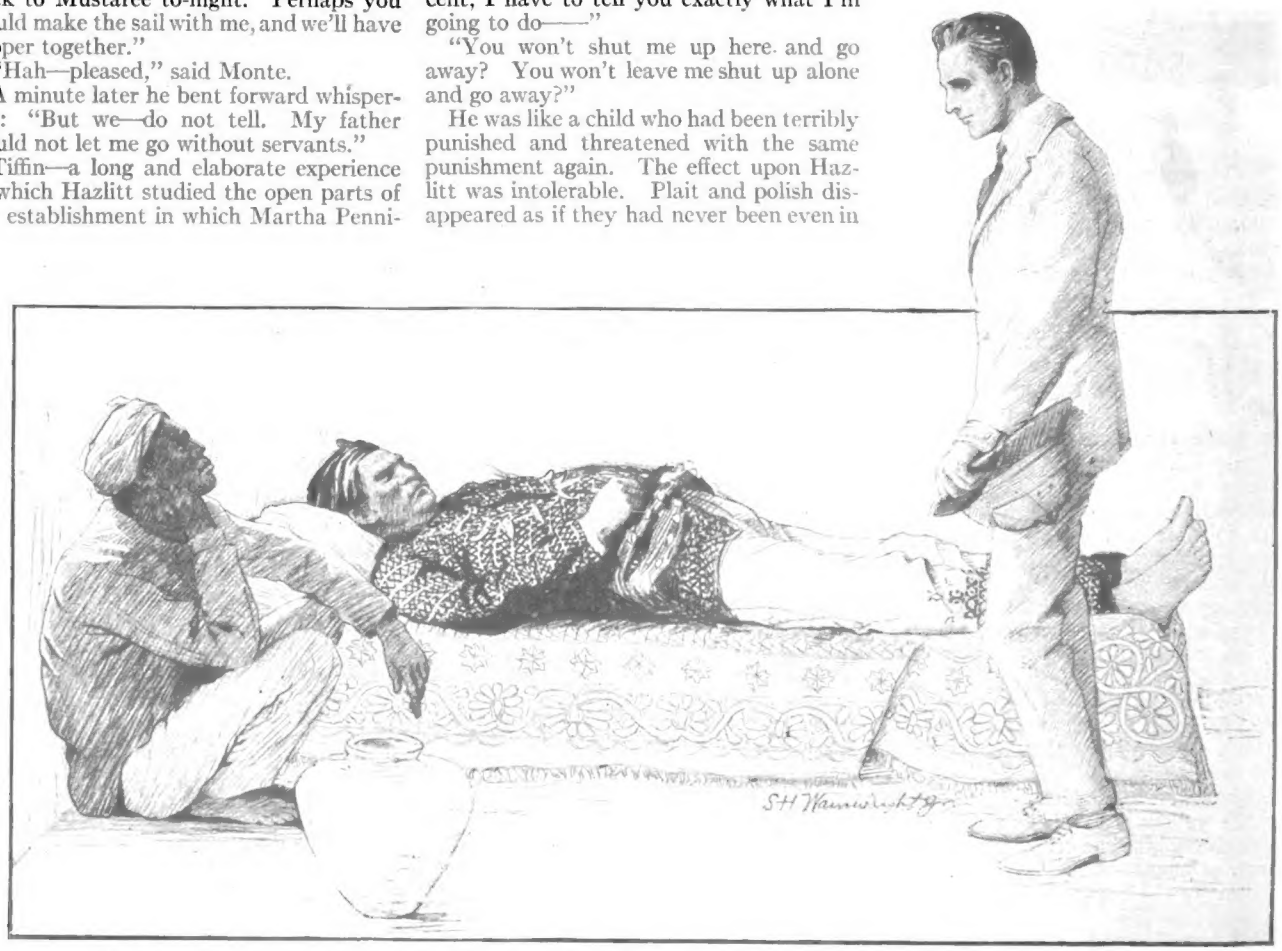
Words stopped. The hulk of a boy did not think of flight or escape. Hazlitt was seized with a mania to get out of the room. Lu Kik was outside the door and entered, taking his place between them. Monte raised himself from the table by his hands.

"I've started something, Lu," Hazlitt said with an embarrassed laugh. "The big fellow's been locked up somewhere before and he's gone—well, as you see him——"

Lu Kik pressed Monte back into his chair, saying gently: "Monte no be 'fraid. Little Looie good to Monte al' li'. Looie know Monte from little boy. Have good time—old Chino and Monte-boy."

This talk went on. Monte's affection for the white man had changed to horror, but he seemed to find hope in the Chinese. Hazlitt could draw only added suspicion in this; that there might be something between the two he did not know. So much depended upon his servant, and there was nothing like full faith in his heart. He took Lu Kik aside, explaining that he was off at once for Mortuagas again this night; that Caliban, missing his son, might possibly send over a boat to Mustaree; that Monte must be hidden away somewhere on this island.

(*Continued on page 90*)



All the vast poundage was soft and sick to-day. It lay flat. Caliban had been brought to audience at this unprecedented hour through the great pain of his heart.

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Queer Business

By Arthur Crabb

Here is another of the stories we promised you—by the man who has put a whole community on the fiction map in three short years. His "Sam Hicks" pretends in "Queer Business" to know something of women. In the next story, Sam sets himself against a friend's most remarkable hunch.

I SAM HICKS, am a respectable married man, with a more than respectable wife and several absolutely not respectable children. But it wasn't always thus! Working backward, first I didn't have any children whatever, next I didn't have Molly, and last I wasn't respectable. On the other hand, Molly has always been more than respectable, and so it comes about that Molly and I don't always agree on all matters pertaining to existence and general conduct before marriage.

On the other hand, I always agree with Molly on matters pertaining to family life, politics, foreign and domestic missions, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera—after marriage. It pays. Again, on the third hand, having known her only five years before my marriage and twelve thereafter, I don't know Molly very well, yet.

It sometimes happens that I am able to tease Molly a little, about things pertaining to pre-wedding days, until Molly finds out that I am teasing her and then I have to stop. One of the teasing fields I love to wander in, is what perfectly nice girls do before they are engaged and how they bring about the engagements. Molly has rather narrow views on the subject.

Although she would admit, I am sure, that she wandered from the fold a little in the tactics which she pursued in consummating our agreement to wed, and has ever since enjoyed privately the resulting sensation of deviltry, I am nevertheless convinced that the following closely expresses her idea of how an engagement should be achieved:

She: Do you find that chair entirely comfortable?

He: Entirely so, thank you. As we were saying, it is impossible to believe that Van Movingwagon ever intended to say that duty lay in the path of pleasure, but rather that pleasure is, and of necessity must be, a stumbling-block—or better, perhaps, a pit, on the road to our higher destiny.

She: Unquestionably, and have we not Oldtruckhorse's deduction that pride can no more become secondary to ambition than that ambition can give way to soul if success is to be truly success?

He: Exactly. And your reference to soul gives me courage and prompts me to mention to you a subject which has for some time past had my most serious consideration.

She: Pray tell me of it.

He: It is that you and I have found ourselves so far in accord on all matters of serious moment, that it seems that our association for all time could not but result in our mutual benefit, providing, as it would, many hours of uninterrupted opportunity for self-improvement. I therefore, with all respect and affection, propose——

She (interrupting, but not knowing that she is doing so): I can not but agree with you, and as I am convinced of the purity of your character and the charm of your personality, not to mention the depth of your intellect, I willingly accept your most complimentary offer. (She holds the tips of her fingers toward him. He rises, bows, kisses them and sits down again.)

WHAT Molly doesn't know about pre-engagement goings on would fill a bookcase, and nobody's gladder of that selfsame fact than I, Sam Hicks; but just the same, I do like to ruffle Molly Hicks once in a while on a quiet evening when nobody but us two are beside the fire, and she wiggles nearer and nearer my book, which same I'm reading in *my* corner of the couch, and finally closes it gently but firmly and—and—what's that got to do with the story?

What story? Why, the story of the lady and gent who are living in harmony, comfort and happiness a door or so down the street, and who, according to my ideas, will keep on so doing always.

The lady, wife and mother was, when the story began, Miss Alice Noyes, and so far as my non-respectable, unmarried experience went, Alice made up into the finest pre-marriage woman I ever saw.

She was tall and dark, with coloring that made October foliage look like a chromo, and a figure that made Venus look like a scrub lady. The teeth of her were white and even, her lips red rose-petals, and her eyes made even me put my hand over mine and say, "Take 'em off me, Alice, me child, I've troubles enough as it is." And her complexion! "It's youth, Sam," Molly said. Maybe it was youth, but to me it looked more like a mixture of cream, cherries, velvet, peaches with the bloom on 'em, and those early pink-and-white apples that grew on my childhood's farm.

And if you'll believe me, that girl, with her face and shape, didn't chatter; she didn't talk much at all; she always seemed to be just about to say something and didn't. But at that, she talked enough; when she said anything it counted.

If a chemist had made a quantitative analysis of Miss Alice Noyes, the report would have been something like this:

Darn pretty girl	56 %
Fine straight pure woman	75 %
Devil	101.5%
Intellect	67.4%
Culture	100 %
Temper (bad to uncertain)	trace %
	399.9 %

That makes four complete women and Alice was surely that, all right.

Furthermore, she had more beaus than four times forty girls could possibly use, and most of them were suitors. Those beaus ran from my own Dix, *ætat* four, up to Henry Swift, *ætat* one hundred and four plus or minus, and a grand mixture they were. How on earth Alice was going to get them all to stand still long enough for her to get a good look at them and select one to keep, I don't know. A small boy entering the village grocery-store will make a bee-line for the box of lollypops and be content, but the same boy turned loose in one of our city candy-stores would have a terrible time deciding what to put his money on.

Now it happened that Miss Noyes and my own Molly Hicks were bosom friends; they hobnobbed together much and I have reason to believe that each had an abiding respect and affection for the other, which was complimentary to me, when you come to think of it, both in my respectable married and non-respectable unmarried aspects. I had never seen any one who could equal those two in their respective classes.

One day I asked Molly why Alice didn't get married.

"The right man hasn't come along, that's all," Molly said calmly.

CAN you imagine the small boy in the city candy-store putting his money back in his pocket and saying, "I don't see anything here I like?" You can't. Neither could I see anything in Alice not being able to discover the right man in the crowd hovering about—all the men in our town and the towns around and the huge city of Alden were in that crowd.

"Besides," Molly went on, "girls don't have to get married to be happy, nowadays."

"Nevertheless," says I, "I notice most of 'em do—that can."

Molly is always ready to stick up for the female race and did this time, but it would take too long to thresh out that argument here.

"Why doesn't she take Billy Wood?" I suggested.

Molly sat on that idea emphatically, and said that Francis Roach stood far more chance.

"Want to bet on that?" said I.

"How are you going to decide it?"

"If she takes Billy, I win; if she takes Frank, you win."

"Suppose she doesn't marry either?"

"Bet's off," I said, and then I saw a chance for a sporting proposition. "Molly, me dear," quoth I, "I'll tell you what we'll do—we'll choose up sides, like 'twas done when we were children. Frank's on

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your side, Billy's on mine—it's your next choice."

"What's the bet?" Molly demanded.

"Satisfaction of winning," I said.

"Umph," sniffed Molly, "I suppose you think you'll win."

"Sure I will, unless you pick my man."

"I'll let you pick five first," Molly said, and I looked at Molly closely.

"Have you any advance information?" I asked.

"Do I usually cheat?"

THERE wasn't any good answer to that, so I got a pad and wrote down my names. The list was this, the notes added being for the information of those who may not know the gentlemen as well as Molly and I did:

William Wood, Harvard, tackle, catcher, rich, good-looking, reputable and brilliant.

Arthur Bent, Harvard, guard, shot-putter, poor, good-looking, reputable, brilliant enough.

John Castle, Yale, pitcher, famous, famous golfer, rich, homely, fairly reputable and no brains.

Hugh Williams, non-col., amateur boxer, poor, reputable, medium good-looking and ditto intelligent.

James Breeze, Princeton, end, first base, poor, reputable, homely, slow-going but persistent and deep rather than brilliant.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Molly. "You've chosen a lot of bruisers. They're all over six feet and not one of them is the type that Alice likes."

"Very well," said I, "choose your five. But let me tell you this— If I were courtin' Miss Noyes I'd go after her with a club in one hand and brass knuckles in the other and a rope handy to tie her with while she answered the minister in the affirmative. She's been the queen of the alley and the whole cheese so long she'd welcome a change. She needs a lord and master with a real punch."

"Sam!" cried Molly, "what language!" And then she said a few other things on the subject which were, or rather are, neither interesting nor important.

It was entirely evident that Molly had no respect whatever for my ideas as to what sort of man Alice would marry, or for that matter, what sort of man any nice intelligent girl would marry. She reached for my pad and pencil and wrote and said:

"Francis Roach."

"He's a nice, amiable boy," I said, "but he's too polite and not boss enough for Alice."

"Barklie Wentworth, Jr.," wrote Molly, ignoring my remarks.

"You're insulting her," I said mildly. "If Alice marries that little runt I'll never forgive her."

"He's a gentleman, enormously rich, very pleasant and socially he's——"

"A little runt," I interrupted. "Can you imagine her holding him in her lap and lovin' him?"

"Just because you're big you needn't think that——"

"G'wan wid yer, why didn't you marry the little professor?"

Molly decided, as she had many times before, that that was enough of that subject and said: "Theodore Meigs."

"Why Teddy, when she can get better music out of a phonograph? Can you see Alice taking off Teddy's muffler and wristlets and arctics some nice warm day and telling him to be a man?"

"It would be better if you wore your arctics oftener," said Molly.

"Exactly!" I exclaimed. "That's the proper wifely attitude—you want to be able to mother the darling, not to have to keep him from being effeminate."

"Archie Wrenn," said Molly, in a tone which made me suspect I'd shaken her faith in Teddy somewhat.

"You're getting warmer," I said. "My only reason for leaving him off my list was that he's too wrapped up in other things like business, hunting, yachts and the like, to give Alice the time she'll need. She ought to be spanked Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and loved to pieces the other days, if she's to be happy. Archie would steer a middle course and she'd be bored to death. However, time will tell. You've got your five candidates. Besides the moral satisfaction I'll put a couple of pair of silk stockings on it, against a pair of golf stockings, home made."

The trouble with betting with Molly is that we have one family fund and it doesn't make any difference which of us pays the bills; likewise Molly would get her silk stockings and I'd get my worsted ones, bet or no bet. Nevertheless, Molly took my wager and added:

"You have queer ideas about women."

"Maybe I have," said I, "but if I haven't got that Noyes girl doped out I'll eat me——"

I am under the impression that I stated that this discussion took place on the couch before the fireplace. Anyway, it did, and I never told Molly what I would eat if I didn't have the right dope on Alice because Molly reached up—notice the "up" particularly—and put her hand firmly over my lips.

"Goose," says she, and just when I was going to start something, she forgot all about me. "S-s-sh—listen. Was that one of the children?" I listened. It wasn't one of the children and nothing of any account happened after that.

A MONTH passed and another and another, even until the lovely month of June was upon us and one evening along toward the end thereof Mrs. Hicks greeted me with the simple words—"Alice is engaged, Sam."

I regarded Mrs. Hicks carefully and came to the conclusion that her statement was an admission that I had had, at least approximately, the right dope on Miss Noyes.

"And Father wins?" said I.

Molly's answer was the making of a face, and finally she told me that James Breeze, Esquire, was the lucky man; likewise she told me all she knew about how it had happened, she having been in secret session with the lady that afternoon. That same evening I saw Alice and picked up a few more details, and the next day Jimmy Breeze came into my office, closed all the doors, and assumed the attitude of a man in a dream.

"It just can't be so, Sam," he said. "There's some mistake."

"Alice has admitted it before witnesses," I said, "and I don't believe you need worry. In fact, I think you'd have an awful hard time getting out of it if you wanted to."

Jimmy grinned inanely. "Don't it beat hell?" he muttered. "I didn't suppose I had the one chance in a million. Think of it, Sam, me winning against all that competition." Then he looked at me with that humorous expression of his. "But then you got Molly—I suppose that didn't use up the last miracle in the world."

Jimmy and I went out to lunch, and when I left him floating away on one of those soft, pink, billowy clouds, I had his story, which with Molly's and Alice's, made things pretty clear. This is what had happened:

It was a wonderful day, one of those June affairs that seems too good to be true, and somehow or other Jimmy Breeze inveigled Alice into going walking with him. It was the day that sent Alice walking, not Jimmy, because Jimmy, for all he was a good, substantial, straight lad, was then only one of the crowd to Alice. I am sure she liked him and respected him, just as I did, but I'm sure that she had no such deep regard for him as I had.

There wasn't much show about Jimmy, he wasn't witty, he had no genius or even any special talents, but he improved with knowing; he grew on you, he made you appreciate the fact that in the long run he was to be depended on.

Those qualities would hardly make much impression on a girl like Alice Noyes, and I had put Jimmy on my list simply on an off chance that she would get tired of the type of man who stands out from the mob. My guess is that on the day of the walk Alice, thinking of the walk, was rather pleased that her companion would walk stolidly beside her and not draw her attention from the beauties of nature and the joy of living,

They hadn't gone very far, however, before Jimmy proposed to Alice again. He was nothing if not persistent.

"Oh, please don't!" Alice said. "It's such a nice day, let's don't spoil it. I do like you, but I don't love you. I don't love anybody and I don't want to be married, not for a long, long time, anyway."

Jimmy tried to argue the matter, but Alice wouldn't have it, and when Alice wouldn't she wouldn't, and Jimmy gave it up again, temporarily. Alice meant what she said: she didn't love Jimmy or anybody and didn't want to be married, and Jimmy had no wit with which to carry on the combat. And so Jimmy walked on, getting what happiness he could out of the beauty of her and her grace and straight back and the way she carried her head and the light of womanly pride and purity that was in her eyes.

AMBITION had never troubled Jimmy very much—he hadn't expected to make the Princeton varsity football team, but he *had* made it and for two years had been its never brilliant but always dependable end. He was never showy and only his team mates appreciated his virtues; he wasn't quite fast enough for an ideal end, but somehow or other when affairs were critical Jimmy appeared from nowhere and saved the day. It was the same way with his play at first base—he neither fielded nor batted brilliantly, but he made his errors when they didn't count and his hits when they did, mostly.

Great ambition wasn't noticeable in him when he left college; he got a job and stuck to it and was making good. Jimmy would never be a plute, but his family

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would never wonder where dinner was coming from, if he ever had a family, and the family would get all he had; it wouldn't go into the stock-market or other similar get-poor-quick schemes.

So Jimmy and Alice walked along, he swinging his walking-stick and drinking in the glories of Alice, she drinking in the glories of nature and pleased that Jimmy was obeying orders. They came to the lake on Norman Dean's place in Stockton, and, knowing the Deans well, they went up the drive to the place where it crosses the water and sat down on the rail of the stone bridge to rest a while. They leaned over and watched some ducks swim from under the bridge and away across the water. Then they spoke of how clear the water was and guessed how deep it was—and came to the conclusion that it was at least ten feet.

Jimmy laid down his walking-stick and went about filling his pipe and lighting it. Alice picked up his stick and examined it casually.

"This is a very nice stick, isn't it?" she said.

"Very indeed," Jimmy said. "I'm very fond of it."

"What are these initials?" Alice asked, pointing to the silver band. Jimmy told her.

"They gave it to me when I was in college," he said.

"Why did they give it to you?"

"Oh, just one of those things," Jimmy answered, and would not tell her that his clubmates had given it to him quietly and with no ceremony just to show that they understood and appreciated a little act of his. Jimmy could hardly talk about it and Alice wanted to know all about it.

"If you don't tell me I'll throw it into the water," she said.

Jimmy smiled at her serenely.

"I will," insisted Alice.

"If you do, I'll throw you in after it," laughed Jimmy. "I wouldn't lose it for a lot."

"I mean it," Alice said.

"So do I." Jimmy was still smiling when he said that. Alice's eyes met his and they looked squarely at each other for an appreciable length of time. Perhaps there had been an unusual and unexpected note in Jimmy's voice which interested Alice. Be that as it may, she lifted the stick slowly and as a man throws a spear she threw it into the lake.

Jimmy smiled on. He laid his pipe on the railing and took a step toward her.

"Don't you dare touch me," she said, her voice tense.

But hardly had she spoken when Jimmy's hand shot out and closed over her wrist. She made a heroic effort to escape him and discovered physical strength as she had never dreamed it existed; she was helpless and knew it and tried other methods of escape, womanly dignity and that sort of thing, but she failed again. She saw Jimmy's smile, as through a haze, she felt her other arm drawn from behind her back and her wrists pinned together as in a vise. She made one last desperate effort to evade him, an entirely futile effort. She felt herself, a strapping, big, strong girl, lifted bodily over the rail as though she were a feather and then she went down, down, down into the black water.

She knew what to do in the water, even with all her clothes on. Twice she had gone overboard that way and she was not afraid. She came to the surface and looked about her. She looked upward and saw Jimmy smiling down at her.

He pointed with his hand. "It's over there," he said.

She swam over there and got the stick and swam toward the shore. Jimmy was there, waiting for her as she waded out.

She faced him, with her head up, her cheeks flaming and her eyes steady.

"You win, Jimmy," she said, and handed him his stick. Then she noticed that his coat and shoes and hat were off.

They did not say another word of the occurrence, but walked home evading the beaten path as much as they could. Four days later Jimmy faced her again, and for the second time since her swim asked her to marry him. The first time Alice had told him what she thought of him and Jimmy had smiled. This time she didn't say anything, but looked him square in the eye, with her cheeks on fire, and nodded her head and Jimmy took her in his arms and kissed her and she kissed him and was the happiest girl in the world, as well she might be if a real man and a safe future should make a girl happy.

They came to dinner with us a few days later, and I, a man, dull and obtuse and unperceiving, saw that beautiful, sought-after, high-tempered, independent young woman's eyes on James Breeze a dozen times and in them I saw love and admiration, but more than that I saw that sweetest of feminine confessions, acknowledgment that she had found her master.

"Well, how about it, Ma?" I said when they were gone.

"She certainly loves him," Molly admitted and then she added— "and she did pretty well, too, I guess."

"I suppose she'd have taken him even if the little affair at the bridge hadn't occurred," I suggested.

"Of course she would, eventually," Molly remarked lightly.

"Maybe, but I doubt it," I said. "My idea of it is that, while Jimmy's a fine boy, quite as fine as grows, what did the trick was that she discovered and will always know, that behind that smile and behind that slow-going, calm good nature of his there's determination and brute strength, and especially brute strength with the courage to use it if the situation demands it. It will undoubtedly never be necessary to use it, but that's not the point. Sometime, when a bridge is handy, I think I'd better throw you off." I got a good firm grip on Molly from behind. "Will you remind me of it sometime?"

"Goose," she said, and tried to get away, but she couldn't and she knew she couldn't.

"You win, Sammy," she said. "It's a queer business, isn't it, what's inside women, nice women?"

I saw that beautiful, independent young woman's eyes on James Breeze a dozen times, and in them I saw love and admiration.

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Courtesy International Studio

Brand Whitlock.

These are two of the three medallions made for the friends of Belgium.

The Story of Hoover

By Vernon Kellogg

IV

WAR-TIME SERVICE

Courtesy International Studio

Herbert Hoover.

The medallions were designed by the Belgian sculptor Devreese during the German occupation.

This is the fourth of five articles in which Vernon Kellogg—one of Hoover's closest personal friends and an active assistant in his war work—tells what sort of man Hoover is, the romantic story of the years of constructive work that lay back of his world-famous war achievements, and the secrets of his more and more notable success as a leader of men and women. The preceding articles described spectacular success as a mining engineer. In this and the final article Dr. Kellogg describes Hoover in the midst of the activities for which he is famous the world over—as the savior of Belgium, the Food Administrator of America, and the Director-General of Relief in Europe. These articles take one behind the scenes to a personal acquaintanceship with the man who was the driving mind and force of the activities.

FROM the first day of the World War, Herbert Hoover has been a world-figure. But much of what he has done, and especially of how he has done it, is still only hazily known, for all the general public familiarity with his name as head of the Belgian relief work, American Food Administrator and, finally, Director-General of the American and Allied relief work in Europe after the armistice. The public knows of him as the initiator and head of great organizations with heart in them, which were successfully managed on sound business principles. But it does not yet know the special character of Hoover's own personal participation in them, the highly original and resourceful contributions to their success by this man of really remarkable endowments, and the formidable obstacles which he had constantly to overcome in making this success possible.

There was little that "just happened" which contributed to this success; that which did just happen usually happened wrong. Things came off because ideals were realized by practical method, decision and driving power.

Hoover—All American

I SHOULD like to be able to give the people of America a revealing glimpse, by outline and incident, of all this. And I should like, too, to be able to make clear the pure Americanism of this man; to disclose the basis of belief in the soundness of the American heart and the practical possibilities of American democracy on which Hoover banked in determining his methods and daring his decisions. This belief was the easier to hold, inasmuch as he has himself the soundness of character, the fundamental conviction of democracy and the true philanthropy that he attributes to the average American. He is his own American model.

To call Herbert Hoover "English," as a cheap form of derogation, is to reveal a surprising paucity of invention in criticism. It is also very unfair to about as American an American as can be found. The translation of Agricola, an account of which closed our last instalment, stretched over the long time that it did, not alone because Mr. and Mrs. Hoover could give only their spare hours, their recreation hours, to it, but also because they could turn to it only while they were in London, where the needed reference books were available. And their presence in London was so discontinuous that their translating work was much more marked by interruption than by continuity. The constant returns to America, where there were the New York and San Francisco offices to be looked after personally, and the many trips to the mining properties scattered over the world, limited Hoover's London days to a comparatively small number in each year.

A London office was, to be sure, necessary between 1902 and 1914 because of the advantage to a world miner of being close to affairs in the world's center of mining interests. And it was also necessary during Belgian relief days because of its unequaled accessibility, by person or cable, from all the vital points in the complex international structure of the relief organization.

But in all this period of London connection, except in the Belgian relief period, Hoover was a familiar figure in mining circles in both New York and San Francisco, and although rarely able to cast his vote in America he maintained a lively interest in American major governmental affairs.

On Stanford's Faculty

HOOVER kept up, too, an active interest in the development of his *alma mater*, Stanford University, and especially in its geology and mining engineering department. In 1908 he was asked to join its faculty, and delivered a course of lectures on the principles of mining, which attracted such favorable comment that he repeated it shortly after in condensed form in Columbia University.

In 1912 he was made a trustee of Stanford, and his constructive service in this position has been an important factor in the university's development.

But all these accounts of Hoover's various activities still leave unanswered many questions concerning the more intimate personal characteristics of the man to whom the world war came in August, 1914, with its special call for service.

He was then just forty years old, known to mining engineers everywhere and to the alumni and faculty and friends of Stanford University and to a limited group of business acquaintances and personal friends but with a name then unknown to the world at large. To-day no name is more widely known. Millions of Europeans call him blessed; millions of Americans call him great. My own belief is that he and his work did more to save Europe from complete anarchy after the war than any other influence exerted on its people from the outside, and that without it there was no other sufficient influence either outside or inside which would have prevented this anarchy.

Hoover's Characteristics

HOOVER'S kinds of work are many, but his recreations are few. His chief form of exercise—if it is exercise—is motoring. He does not play outdoor games: no golf, tennis; but little walking. He has no system of kicking his legs about in bed or going through calisthenics on rising. And yet he keeps in very good physical condition. At least he keeps in sufficiently good condition to do several men's work every day. He has a theory about this which he practises, and which he occasionally explains briefly to those who remonstrate with him about his neglect of exercise.

"You have to take exercise," he says, "because you overeat. I do not overeat, and therefore I do not need exercise."

It sounds very simple and conclusive; and it seems to work—in his case.

He likes social life but not society life. He enjoys company but he wants it to mean something. He has little small talk

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The miracle of feeding the five thousand communes of Belgium and Occupied France. During four years of relief work, each destitute person received a pint of soup and from eight-and-a-half to fifteen ounces of bread a day. Never from beginning to end did a single commune fail of its daily bread.

but plenty of significant talk. He saves time by cutting out frills, both business and social. His directness of mental approach to any subject is expressed in his whole manner, his immediate attack in conversation on the essence of the matter, his few words, his quick decisions. He can make these decisions quickly because he has clear policies to guide him. I recall being asked by him to come to breakfast one morning at Stanford after he had been elected trustee, to talk over the matter of faculty standards. His first question to the two or three of us there, was: What is the figure below which a professor of a given grade (assistant, associate or full professor) can not maintain himself here on a basis which will not lower his efficiency in his work or his dignity in the community? We finally agreed on certain figures.

"Well," said Hoover, "that must be the minimum salary of the grade."

Hoover Tackles Obstacles

HE KNOWS what he wants to do, and goes straight forward toward doing it; but if difficulty too great intervenes—it really has to be very great—he withdraws for a fresh start and tries another path. I always think of him as outside of a circle in the center of which is his goal. He strikes the circle at one spot; if he can get through, well and good. If not, he draws away, moves a little around the circumference and strikes again. This resourcefulness and fertility of method are conspicuous characteristics of his. To that degree he is "diplomatic." But if there is only one way, he fights to the extreme along that way. And those of us who have lived with him through the difficult, the almost impossible, days of Belgian relief, food administration and general European after-the-war relief, have come to an almost superstitious belief in his capacity to do anything possible to human power.

He has a great gift of lucid exposition. His successful argument with Lloyd George, who began a conference with him on the Belgian relief work strongly opposed to it on grounds of its alleged military disadvantages to the Allies, and closed it by the abrupt statement: "I am convinced; you have my permission," is a conspicuous example, among many, of his way of winning adherence to his plans on a basis of good grounds and a lucid and effective presentation of them. He has no voice for speaking to great audiences, no flowers of rhetoric or familiar platitudes for professional oratory; but there is no more effective living speaker to small groups or conferences around the council-table. He is clear and convincing in speech because he is clear and precise in thinking. He is fertile in plan and constructive in method because he has creative imagination.

The first of his war calls to service came just as he was preparing to return to America from London, where he had brought his family from California to spend the school vacation of 1914. Their return passage was engaged for the middle of August. But the war came on, and with it his first relief undertaking. It was only the trivial matter—trivial in comparison with his later undertakings—of helping seventy thousand American travellers, stranded at the outbreak of the war, to get home. These people, rich and poor alike, found themselves penniless and helpless because of the sudden moratorium. Letters of credit, travelers' checks, drafts, all were mere printed paper. They needed real money, hotel rooms, steamer passages, and advice. And there was nobody in London, not even the benevolent and most willing but in this respect powerless American ambassador, who could help them.

Getting America Home

AT LEAST there seemed none until Hoover transferred the "relief" which had automatically congested about his private offices in the "city" during the first two days to larger headquarters in the Hotel Savoy. He gathered together all his available money and that of American friends and opened a unique bank which had no depositors and took in no money, but continuously gave it out against personal checks signed by unknown but American-looking people on unknown banks in Walla Walla and Fresno and Grand Rapids and Dubuque and Emporia and New Bedford. And he found rooms in hotels and passage on steamers first-class, second-class or steerage, as happened to be possible.

Now for all these checks and promises

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to pay, just two hundred and fifty dollars failed to be realized by a man who took a risk on American honesty to the extent of several hundred thousand dollars.

But the work was not limited to lending the barely necessary funds to those who wished to borrow. He raised a charitable fund among these same friends to care for the really destitute ones until other relief could come. This came in the shape of the American Government's "ship of gold," the battle-ship *Tennessee*, sent over to the rescue. Hoover was then asked by Ambassador Page and the army officers in charge of the London consignment of this gold to persuade his volunteer committee to continue their labors during its distribution. With this money available, all who were able to produce proof of American citizenship could be given whatever was necessary to enable them to reach their own country.

And then came the next insistent call for help. And in listening to it and, with swift decision undertaking to respond to it, Herbert Hoover launched himself, without in any degree realizing it, on a career of public service and corresponding abnegation of private business and self-interest, that was to last all through the war and through the armistice period, and is to-day still going on.

Putting Efficiency in Philanthropy

THE call was for the relief of Belgium. I know the story of Hoover in his relation to the relief of Belgium pretty well because I became one of his helpers in it soon after the war began and remained in it until the end. But it is a hard story to tell; there is too much of it. My special duties were of a kind to keep me constantly in touch with "the Chief," and I was able to realize, as only a few others were, the load of nerve-racking responsibility and herculean labor carried by him behind the more open scene of public-money gathering, food-buying and transporting, and the daily feeding of the ten million imprisoned people of occupied Belgium and France.

In the relief of these helpless peoples Hoover put—perhaps for the first time, certainly for the first time on any such enormous scale and with such outstanding success—philanthropy on a basis of what dear old Horace Fletcher, shut up with us in Belgium during the Occupation, would permit to be referred to by no other phrase than the somewhat hackneyed one of "engineering efficiency," unless we would use a new word for it which he had coined. In fact, he used the new word, "Hooverizing," two years before it became familiar in America with another meaning, as a synonym for efficiency with a heart in it. And I prefer his meaning of the word to the food-saving meaning with which we became familiar in Food Administration days.

Despite the general popular knowledge that there was a relief of Belgium and that Hoover was its organizer and directing head, there still seems to be, if I may judge by the questions often asked me, no very wide knowledge of just why there had to be such relief of Belgium and how Herbert Hoover came to undertake it. A fairly full answer to these queries makes a proper introduction to any account, however brief, of his participation in this extraordinary part of the history of the war.

The World War began, as we all most vividly remember, with the invasion of Belgium. And this invasion resulted in producing very promptly not only a situation appalling in its immediate realization, but one of even terrifying possibilities for the near future. For through the haze of the smoke clouds from burning towns and above the rattle of the machine guns in Dinant and Louvain could be seen the hovering specter of starvation and heard the wailing of hungry children. And how the specter was to be made to pass and the children to hush their cries was soon the problem of all problems for Belgium.

Within ten weeks after the first shots of the war, all of Belgium—except that dreary little stretch of sand and swamp in the northwestern corner of it which for over four years was all of the kingdom of Belgium under the rule of King Albert—was not only in the hands of a brutal enemy, but was enclosed and shut away from the rest of the world by a rigid ring of steel. Not only did the Germans maintain a ring of bayonets and electrified wire fence—this latter along the Belgian-Dutch frontier—around it, but the Allies, recognizing that for all practical war purposes, occupied Belgium was now German territory, had to include it in their blockade of the German coast. Thus no persons or supplies could pass in or out of Belgium except under extraordinary circumstances, such as a special permission from both Germans and Allies or a daring and almost impossible blockade-running.

Belgium Starving

NOW, Belgium is not, as America is, self-sustaining as to food. Belgium is not primarily an agricultural country, despite the fact that what agriculture it does have is the most intensive and highly developed in Europe. It is an industrial country, the most highly industrialized in Europe, with only one-sixth of its people supporting themselves by agriculture. It depends upon constant importations for fifty per cent. of its general food needs and seventy-five per cent. of its needed food-grains.

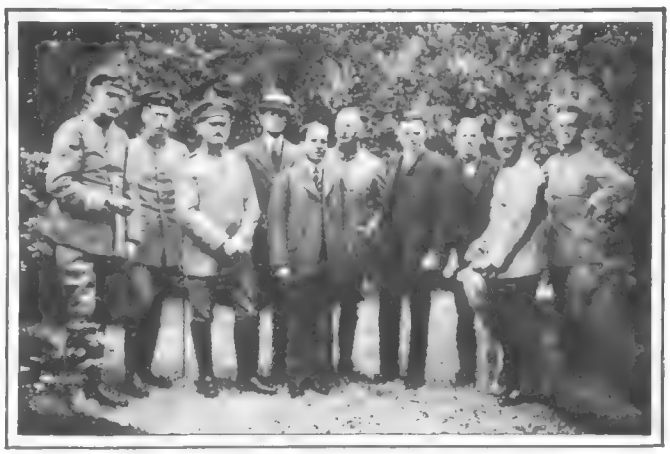
The ring of steel about Belgium, then, if not promptly broken, plainly meant starvation. The imprisoned Belgians saw, with the passing days, their little piles of stored food supplies get lower. They had immediately begun rationing themselves. The Government and cities had taken possession of such small food stocks as had not been seized by the Germans for their armies, and were treating them as a common supply for all the people. They distributed this food as well as they could during a reign of terror, with all railways and motors controlled by their conquerors. They lived in those first weeks on little food but much hope. For were not their powerful protectors, the French and English, very quickly going to drive the invaders back and out of their country? But it soon became apparent that it was the Allied armies that were being driven not only out of Belgium but farther and farther back into France. So the Allies could do nothing and the Germans would do nothing to help them. Indeed, everything the Germans did was to make matters worse. There was only one hope: They must have food from outside sources, and to do this they must have recourse to some powerful neutral help.

Hoover to the Rescue

BELGIUM, and particularly Brussels, has always had its American colony. And it was to these Americans that Belgium turned for help. Many members of the colony left as soon as they could after the war began, but some, headed by Minister Brand Whitlock, remained. When the Belgian court left Brussels for Antwerp, and later for Le Havre, part of the diplomatic corps followed it, but a smaller part stayed in Brussels to occupy for the rest of the war a most peculiar position. Mr. Whitlock elected to stay. It was a fortunate election for the Belgians.

When they appealed to Mr. Whitlock for help, he called to his assistance certain American engineers and business men then resident in Brussels, notably Daniel Heineman, Millard Shaler and William Hulse. He also had the very effective help of his first secretary of legation, Hugh Gibson, now our minister to Poland. Their first effort, in cooperation with the burgomaster of Brussels and a group of Brussels business men, was the formation of a Central Committee of Assistance and Provisioning, under the patronage of the ministers of the United States and Spain (Mr. Whitlock and the Marqués de Villalobar).

This committee was first active in the internal measures for food distribution, but quickly realizing that a more radical relief was necessary, it obtained, after much pressure and some delay, a general permission from the German authorities for the importation of food into Belgium by way of the Dutch frontier, together with a guarantee that such imported food would be entirely free from requisition by the German army. Also, a special permission was accorded to Mr. Shaler to go to Holland, and if necessary to England, to try to arrange for obtaining and transporting to Belgium certain specified kinds and quantities of foodstuffs. But no money



Group of Americans and German officers at Great Headquarters. The Americans are, from left: J. B. White, Vernon Kellogg, Herbert Hoover, Philip Chadbourn.

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This concert hall in Brussels was turned by the C. R. B., of which Herbert Hoover was the great "Chief," into a warehouse for distributing clothing to destitute Belgians.

could be sent out of Belgium to pay for them, except a first small amount which Mr. Shaler was allowed to take with him.

In Holland, Shaler found the Dutch Government quite willing to allow foodstuffs to pass through Holland for Belgium, but it asked him to try to arrange to find the supplies in England. Holland already saw that she would need to hold all of her food supplies for her own people. So Shaler went on to London. Here he tried to interest influential Americans in Belgium's great need, and, through Edgar Rickard, an American engineer, he was introduced to Hoover.

Launching the C. R. B.

ON OCTOBER seventh Hoover introduced Shaler to Doctor Page, the American ambassador, a man of heart, decision and prompt action, and on the same day the ambassador was able to cable to Washington that the British Government agreed to permit food from England or abroad to pass into Belgium through Holland if such supplies were safeguarded within Belgium by Americans acceptable to Ambassador Page and Minister Whitlock, and if the German Government would give guarantees for their non-seizure by German soldiers and officials. Ambassador Page suggested to Washington that if the American Government was in accord with the whole matter as far as it had gone it should secure the approval of the German Government. After an exchange of telegrams between Brussels, London, Washington and Berlin, Ambassador Page was informed by Ambassador Gerard, and also by Washington, that the German Government agreed to the arrangements.

Some time during the course of these negotiations Ambassador Page and the Belgian authorities formally asked Hoover to take on the task of organizing the relief work, if the diplomatic arrangements came to a satisfactory conclusion, and Hoover agreed to do it. His first step was to join his friends who had helped in relieving the stranded Americans with the American group in Brussels, and in the name of this committee to issue an appeal to the American people to consolidate all Belgian relief funds and place them in the hands of his committee for disposal. At the same time Minister Whitlock cabled an appeal to President Wilson to call on America for aid in the relief of Belgium.

The next step, which was taken by Hoover under the advice of Ambassador Page, was to set up a wholly new and larger neutral organization. For this Hoover enlisted the support of Messrs. Edgar Rickard, John B. White, Colonel Millard Hunsiker, J. F. Lucey and Clarence Graff, all American engineers and business men and then in London. These men, together with Messrs. Shaler and Gibson of Brussels as active members and with Hoover as active chairman, and the American ambassadors in London, Berlin and Paris, the Spanish ambassador in London, the Dutch minister to the Belgian Government, and the American and Spanish ministers in Brussels as honorary chairmen, launched, in the last week in October, the "Commission for Relief in Belgium." Brand Whitlock and the Marqués de Villalobar, the American and Spanish ministers in Brussels, by virtue of their special relations to the commission and the German Government inside Belgium, became known as the commission's "protecting ministers."

Hoover Gets Busy

THE "C. R. B." was organized. It had its imposing list of diplomatic personages. It had a chairman and secretary and treasurer and all the rest. But to feed the clamoring Belgians it had to have food. This food had to be obtained in a world already being ransacked by the purchasing agents of France and England seeking the stocks that these countries knew would soon be necessary to meet the growing demands of their armies and civilians drawn from production into the great game of destruction. And the food had to be paid for. Once obtained it had to be transported overseas and through the mine-strewn Channel to Rotterdam, the nearest open port in Holland, and thence by canals and railways into the starving country, and its use there absolutely restricted to the civil population. The feeding of Belgium had to begin immediately and arrangements had to be made to keep it up indefinitely. The war was not to be a short one; that was already plain.

It was up to Hoover to get busy; very busy.

The first officials of the C. R. B. and all the men who came into it later agree

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on one thing: We relied absolutely on our chairman to plan, to drive, to make the impossible things possible. We did our best to carry out what was assigned to us to do. If we had ideas and suggestions, they were welcomed by him. If good, they were adopted. But principally we worked as we were told for a man who worked harder than any of us, and who planned most of the work for himself and all of us.

A Gigantic Job

HE HAD the vision. He saw from the first that the relief of Belgium would be a large job; it proved to be a gigantic one. He saw that all America would have to be behind us; indeed, that the whole humanitarian world would have to back us up, not so much in funds perhaps as in moral support. For the military logic of the situation was only half with us; it was half against us. It was about an even break between military advantage and military disadvantage, both for the Allies and for Germany, as regards the relief of Belgium.

The British admiralty, trying to blockade Germany completely, saw in the feeding of ten million Belgians and French in German-occupied territory a relief to the occupiers, who would, by the accepted rules of the game, have to feed these people from their own food supplies. The fact that the Germans declared from the first that they never would do this, and in every test proved that they would not, was hard to drive home to the admiralty and to the many amateur English strategists safely far from the sufferings of the hungering Belgians.

On the other hand, other influential governmental officials, notably the prime minister and the heads of the foreign office, saw in the Allied permission and help for these people the only means to prevent them from saving their lives in the one other way possible to them—that is, by working for the Germans. Fathers of families, however patriotic, can not see their wives and children starve to death when rescue is possible. And the Germans offered this rescue to them all the time. Never a day in all the four years when German placards offering food and money for their work did not stare in the faces the five hundred thousand idle skilled Belgian workmen and the hundreds of thousands of unskilled ones shut up in the country.

Germany, also, had two opinions about Belgian relief. There were zu Reventlow and his great party of jingoes who cried from beginning to end: Kick out these American spies; make an end of this soft-heartedness. Here we have ten million Allied hostages in our hands. Let us say to England and France and the refugee Belgian cabinet at Le Havre: Your people may eat what they now have; it will last them a month or two; then they shall not have a mouthful from Germany or anywhere else unless you give up the blockade and open the ports of Belgium and Germany alike to incoming food.

On the other side were von Bissing and his German governing staff in Belgium, together with most of the men of the military General Staff at Great Headquarters. Von Bissing tried in his heavy, stupid way to placate the Belgians; that was part of his policy. So he would offer them food—always for work—with one hand while he gave them a slap with the other. He wanted Belgium to be tranquil. He did not want openly to use machine guns on starving mobs in the cities, however many unfortunates he allowed to be quietly carried out to the *Tir National* at gray dawn to stand for one terrible moment before the ruthless firing-squad.

And the hard-headed men of the General staff knew that starving people did not lie down quietly and die. All the northern lines of communication between the west front and Germany ran through the countries of these ten million imprisoned French and Belgians. Even without arms they could make much trouble for the guards of bridges and railways in their dying struggles. At least it would require many soldiers to kill them fast enough to prevent it. And the soldiers, all of them, were needed in the trenches.

"These Quixotic Americans"

IN ADDITION the German General Staff earnestly desired and hoped up to the very last that America would keep out of the war. And these extraordinary Americans in Belgium seemed to have all of America behind them; that is what the great relief propaganda and the imposing list of diplomatic personages on the C. R. B. list were partly for. Hoover had realized from the beginning what this would mean.

The propaganda not only brought the money that was needed for charity, but it made the cause of Belgian relief a personal cause with millions of Americans and a semi-official cause of the American government. "No," said the higher German officials, "it will not do to interfere too much with these quixotic Americans."

But the Germans, most of them at least, never really understood us. One day as Hoover was finishing a conversation with

(*Continued on page 94*)

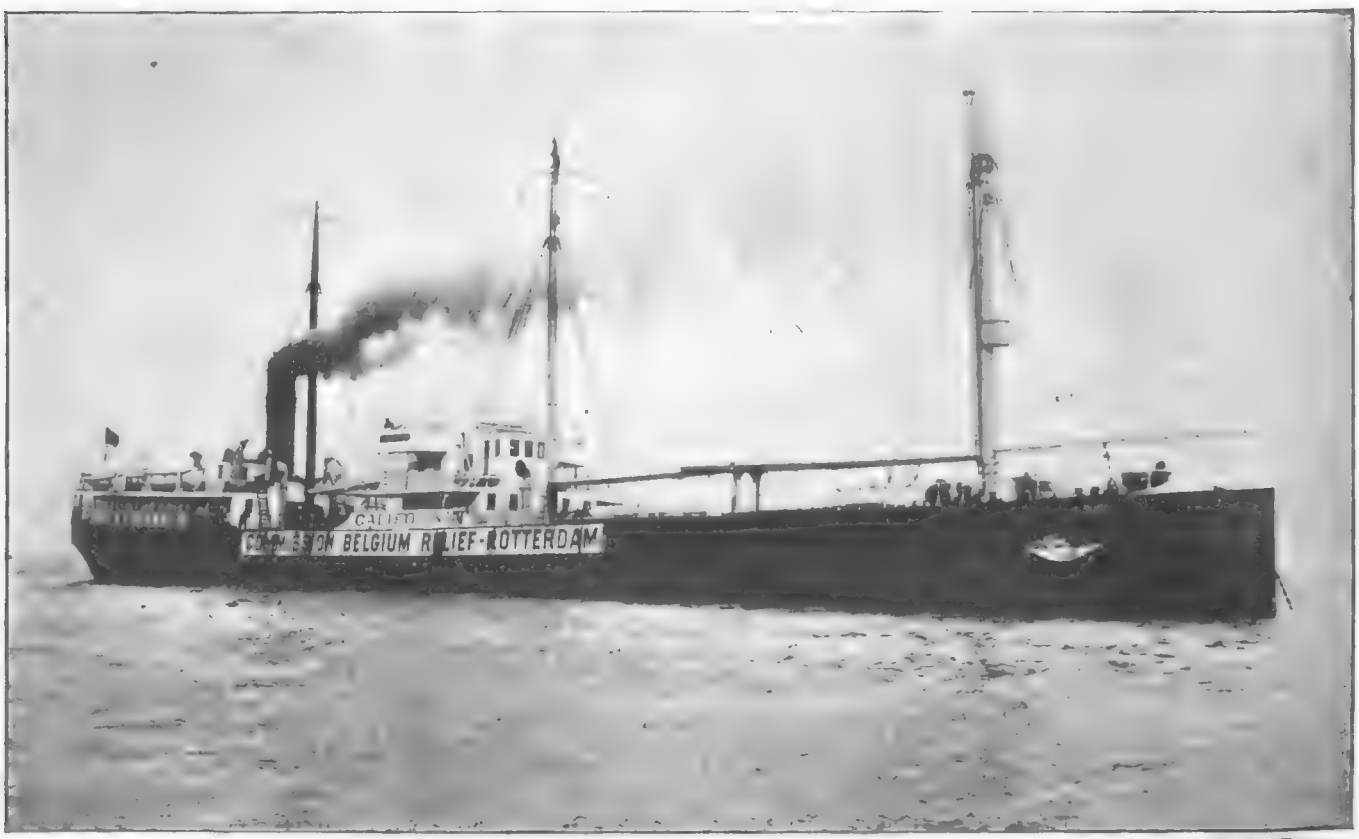

Photo by Paul Thompson

The ship "Camino" carrying food from California to starving Belgium. One of the many things in the big job that Hoover took over was to get a fleet of ships to carry the food from America.

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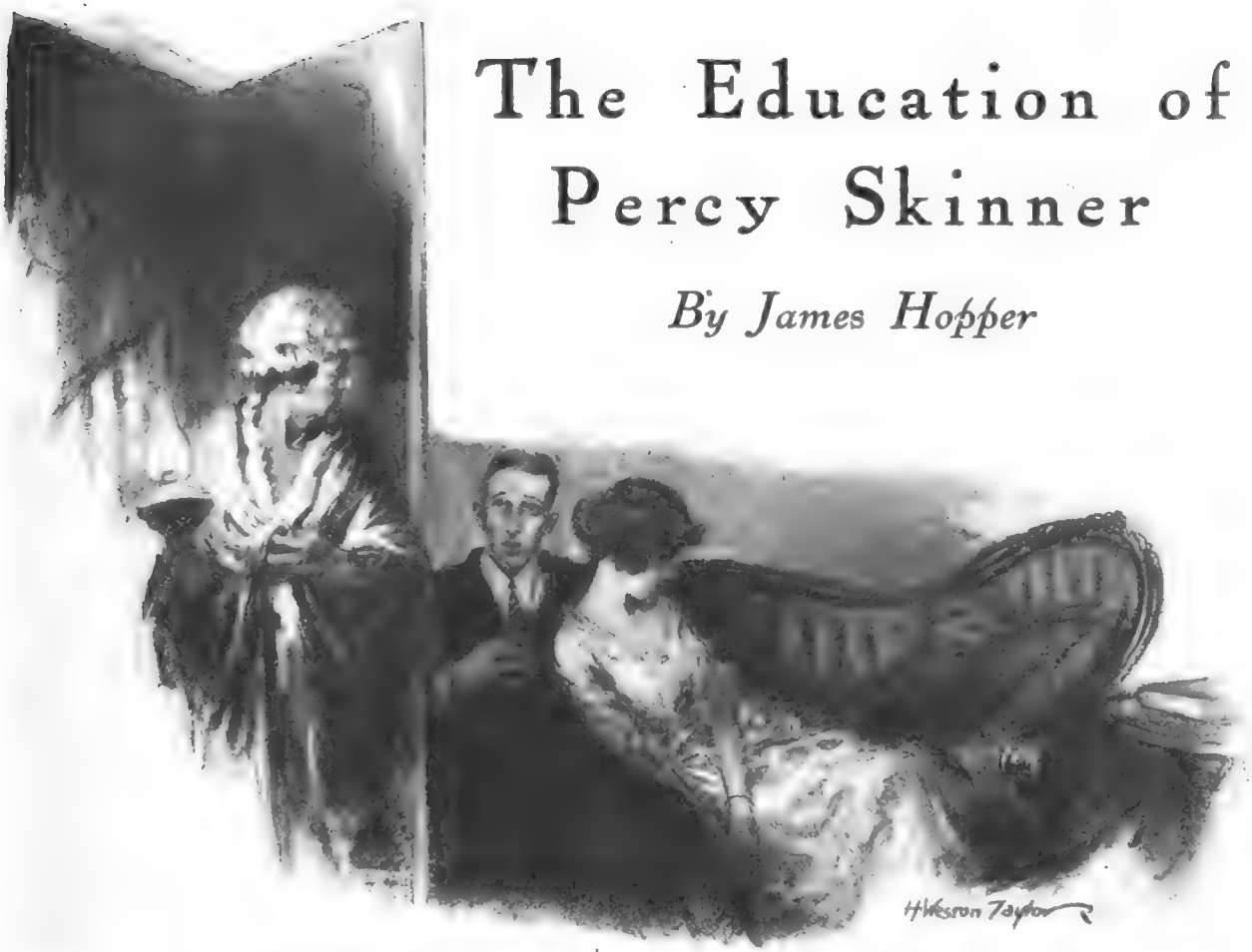
The Education of Percy Skinner

By James Hopper



Many alarms were suffered in the front parlor from boarders supposed to be in bed, and who were not.

THIS happened in the days antedating the era of the Great Prohibition. It could then not be written for fear it might prove Bad Example. Now, though, full within the time of the Great Prohibition, it is free of such menace. Bad it may still be, but Example it can not be—not by the remotest of possibilities. It is therefore set down to paper in the full certitude that it will do no one harm and lead no one astray.

Percy Skinner worked behind the silk counter of the largest department-store in a great city of our land—a city so great it is called little, and so new it is called old. "Little, old ——" it is called, and within it are gathered, raised to the *n*th degree, size, fortune and folly. Everything there is *est* —the buildings highest, all things dearest, the music wildest, and there, in the past, were the cocktails strongest and the beer coldest. A sublimated mining-camp it is, in this land which, so far, has been after all but a mine—a placer-mine—with its treasures strewn over the ground merely for the picking. But this is changing—that is what ails us. The loot is all off the surface, and now we must dig; there's where the shoe pinches—the eighteen-dollar shoe!

Percy Skinner worked behind the silk counter, which means that forty-eight times a day he drew down from the shelves on high some hundred bolts of shimmering stuff which he spread under the palpitant nose of some frivolous little lady, who after hesitating hours, usually went away having bought none of it. He was a poor salesman. He was shy—that was the truth of it. The subtle fragrance which emanates from femininity had the power of paralyzing him stiff. He paled, his jaws locked, his tongue thickened, he became a perfect idiot. His salary was eighteen a week.

Raising the question:—Which was more useful in this education—the serious memory courses or the frivolous ones conducted by Rosie O'Flare. Mr. Hopper doesn't say, but he tells a fascinating story of Percy Skinner, silk salesman. Some time during the summer EVERYBODY'S will publish a remarkable two-part story by Mr. Hopper, called "The Scoop of Charles Hamilton Potts."

Every day after work he went to the Young Men's Protective Club. He took a chair in the big hall, facing the white cloth stretched for the lantern projections. To his left was the door of the elevator which went up to the handball courts and down to the swimming-pool. This door clanged incessantly to the entrance or exit of fresh-cheeked young men, all smooth and glowing with the cleanliness, inner and outer, of exercise and bath. Percy threw a side glance at them once in a while, and then an obscure discontent stirred his heart, to which, however, he did not listen.

He had no time for frivolities; he was busy bettering his mind, fitting himself for advancement in the world, as he and Etta in sage counsel had decided many times he should do. He was taking courses in bookkeeping, typewriting, stenography and Spanish, and sedulously attending two other courses which were guaranteed to give him respectively an unerring memory and an iron will. Any one watching him as he sat there, waiting for the lesson to begin, would have felt for him something close to pity. He looked so shut-in, so disoxygenated! Though still a young man, his hair was dry, his cheeks were lined, his eyes lusterless. One felt like bouncing him down into the pool or up into the handball courts. All about him were many just like him or worse than he, older men, all with the parchment skin, the dead eyes who to the toil and confinement of their day's work added this toil and confinement—and all very patient and wistful.

AFTER his classes Percy Skinner went to dinner at a special little eating-place frequented of pale people, in the window of which were spread cardboard packages and loose cereals, that gave it the appearance of a place dedicated rather to the needs of hens than the wants of men. At a hygienic table, Percy partook of an aseptic meal. He had early become a sober student of the cult known as Chew-chew, and had acquired an exaggerated fear and hatred of the monster called Protein. The base of his dinner was apt to be a substance seemingly extracted from a packing-case, doused with bluish milk, and crowned, on festive days, with a cold baked apple.

Upon which, fortified, he went to call on Etta. Etta Schlumberger was a sensible maid with flaxen hair, wide blue eyes, and a soft knob at the end of her nose which

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somehow expressed all her virtues, which were gentleness, domesticity, and good common sense. The affair was of long standing, but had run well-banked, without flame. Several years ago they had decided they would marry, and at the same time had decided it would be foolish to marry too soon.

They had settled upon the time thus: When Percy would have reached forty a week, and would have saved five hundred dollars, they would marry. At present, he had accumulated three hundred and sixty-four of the five hundred dollars, but his salary was still eighteen. They were patient, however, and did not worry; Percy's regular habits, his devotion to duty, were bound to preserve him from all perils; the Club courses would do the rest.

ETTA'S mother took in boarders; the house offered but little of the seclusion dear to lovers. After many alarms suffered in the front parlor from boarders supposed to be in bed and who were not, Etta had fitted a small back hall-room as the private family "sitting-room." This the family was taught to evacuate as though it had been mined, promptly upon the striking of nine; after which Percy and Etta occupied it alone. They sat alone in the dimly lighted, silent, little place, on a plush sofa, side by side. Now and then, one of them made some remark, seldom picked up by the other—for since they had come to a decision as to their marriage and its date, they had really little to say. At half-past nine, Percy passed his arm around her waist and drew her closer. She remained a little stiff for five minutes longer, then yielded and dropped her head upon his shoulder with a sigh. Thereafter they spoke not at all, but remained immobile and mute, her fragrant little head against his cheek, while the clock slowly ticked. At half-past ten she rose, and firmly sent him home. He made but little resistance. Just as well as she, he knew that his future, and their happiness, depended altogether upon Regular Habits.

On Sundays, he took her to church. Her church was the Lutheran, but he was broad in matters of religion, and was quite willing to make hers his own. They sang out of a common hymnal, holding the book in their four hands, which now and then touched a little. On the way back after church, he drew from his pocket a twenty-five-cent box of caramels, such as he bought religiously every Sunday before starting for her house, and they munched gently as they walked.

He dined with the family at the boarding-house. After dinner several young men called, attracted by Etta's younger sister, who was still unattached; and every one adjourned to the cracked piano in the front parlor, to sing college songs. By four, though, Percy and Etta slipped out, and went to the Zoo to see the bears.

This was Percy Skinner's life, his hopes and his plans. Till he met Miss Rose Salvador O'Flare. Miss Rosie O'Flare was a pretty brunette, with sparkling eyes, and red lips that protruded a little under the most delicate umbrage and were most disturbing. She worked in the same emporium as Percy, across the aisle from him, and farther down, in an atmosphere of snowy lingerie. His eyes sometimes strayed over there, but immediately withdrew chastely.

How the thing began, Percy could never quite recall afterward. As near as he could remember—and somehow this did not seem sufficient to explain everything—he had been just on the point of entering "Vegetariana" for his dinner when she had come sailing along before the delicious little breeze of the late March day, her olive cheeks darkly flushed, her parted lips uncarmined, and her eyes luminous. A red

They sang out of a common hymnal, holding the book in their hands, which now and then touched a little.

ribbon somewhere about her—he could never remember where—had completed the set of signals; he stopped, she stopped, and they said a few words of little consequence, ending with: "Well, so long!"

Everything, so far, was well. He was safe; they were just beginning to turn from each other. Then Fate, or an Imp, goaded him to add: "I gotta go to supper."

Her eyes passed swiftly over the pale front of Vegetariana, the pale show-window with the pale cereals; shaded a little by the long lashes, her eyes rose to him, as she said, "You eat in that place?"

There was that in her tone which somehow made the admission difficult. "Well—yes—sometimes," he stammered.

She leveled at him a clear look that read all of the truth, and then, with an impulsiveness which he had thought altogether charming, she cried gaily, "Oh, come eat with me—*I'll* show you the place for the eats!"

And he had gone—that he remembered clearly afterward—he had gone! Without further question, without hesitation, he took his place at her side, and striding swiftly, elbow to elbow like old comrades, they went down the street, turned, climbed down some steps—and were in the place.

It was of stone, low and arched. Tables were along the walls; they took one in a corner. In the center of the table a singular object stood—a sort of scaffolding hold-

ing two long transparent vessels, each with a little spiggot at the lower end. One was red and the other yellow.

"Look not upon the wine when it is red," she said, and turned the spiggot of the yellow decanter. She passed the glass to Percy and, fixing him commandingly, said, "Taste that!"

It was disappointing. It did not taste nearly as good as it looked pretty. It was sour. But in a minute he felt a pleasant warmth rise in him. It was a warmth such as he had never felt. It wasn't in any one place and wasn't too hot or not enough, but it was all over and just right.

It stole deliciously up from one's heels to one's head—and some stayed in the head. He tried another sip. The effect was repeated; a new wave of the pleasing warmth enveloped him, grateful as an extra suit of underwear on a very cold day.

"There!" she said, examining him approvingly across the table. "You look better already!

"That's just what you needed," she went on, her eyes still on him, her approbation still surer of itself and taking on a tinge of maternal tenderness. "In fact, that's what you've needed for a long, long time!"

The food she ordered added somehow to his well-being. Somehow everything was pleasantly warm this evening. Scientific mastication went under the table; it is to be recorded regretfully that he gulped. He ate red meat, and long pastes that were hard to handle but which slipped down very obligingly when once conveyed to the mouth, and other little square pastes with mysterious stuffing between layers. For a while he was worrying a little, wondering how much money he had in his pocket. But she, who seemed to possess a singular ability to read his thoughts, and yet while reading them, to make of them something natural and amusing rather than something to be ashamed of, said immediately: "It's Dutch treat to-night, you know. Yes, it is. You can treat me some other night—to-night's Dutch treat!"

An orchestra struck up. Couples left the tables and glided up and down. This had an extraordinary effect on Miss Rosie. Her eyes danced, her body would not keep still. "Don't you rag?" she asked.

He said, "No, I don't."

IN truth, he should have said, "I can't." But "I don't" could be spoken in a tone suggestive of delicate and ethical choice which it is difficult to give to "I can't."

After a while, a young man sitting alone at a table across the aisle came over and asked her to dance. With a glance at Percy which half-begged permission, she rose smoothly to the waiting coxcomb, and instantly in rhythm to the music slid away in his arms. Percy immediately felt lonely. He did not seem seated before a small table, but before a desert stretching emptily for miles. He watched the two. She danced wondrously—and ardently. It hurt him to see her, yet he could not keep his eyes off. When she returned, breathing a little fast between her parted lips, a sudden savage desire to hurt her took possession of him. But the best he could do was to say, in an ill-humored tone: "Well, let's be going."

She went readily enough, with a quick submission that made him sorry for his brutality, and they got into a car a little sadly.

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"I get off at Fifty-eighth," he said. "Where are you going?"

"Oh, I go clear up to One Hundred and Seventh."

He got off at Fifty-eighth. He reached the sidewalk, then turned and watched the car as it clanged cumbrously on its way. The street looked as long and empty as the table had done while she had danced.

In Etta's small parlor he soon lost that desolation, sitting there with her in the half-light, her head against his cheek. And the following morning, thinking it over, he decided that if he met Miss Rosie O'Flare in the evening, he would not go with her. Yet at noon he slipped to the bank and drew twenty dollars from his savings-account—just so as not to be caught without ammunition if anything *did* happen, though he was still determined nothing should happen. And at seven, when she came sailing along, as if part of the lively breeze, and said, with a slight, disapproving look at Vegetariana, "You're not going to eat in *that* place, are you?" he answered, "N-n-n-n-no—let's go to the place where we went last night, eh? I like that place!" And they went.

This time he danced. When first she said: "*Really*, don't you dance?" he answered with decision, "No, I don't dance." When a little later she said, "Don't you really? Gee, you look like you'd make a swell dancer!" he answered once more, with a decision he did not feel at all within himself, where as a matter of fact he was all wishful: "Naw—I don't care for dancing."

He noticed that the lone young man of the night before was again here, that he was sending longing looks at Rosie. Panic seized him, and when she whispered urgently, "Oh, come and try; it's easy; I'll show you," he mumbled a refusal which was not quite a refusal. "It's a one-step," she went on eagerly. "One two, one two—hear it? Just like walking—all you have to do is walk—one two—oh, come on!"

SHE had half risen; the light of her eyes cascaded upon him; it seemed a shame not to meet half-way such gaiety and such joy—especially with that impertinent pirate stationed over there across the aisle. Percy could see the man had just made up his mind to come over. "All right," he murmured hastily. "I'll try; you steer me!"

So this was dancing! Gee! No wonder people liked to dance! And what a fool he had been! The realization came to him before he had taken one step—the realization of the beauty of the proceeding: the beauty of holding her thus in his arms, so soft, so delicate, so warm, so fragrant; they two the heart of the music, whelmed in its iridescence. His soul expanded exquisitely; to his hot head there rushed a whirling composite vision of all the beautiful things he had known—the rose, the lark, a sealskin coat, the phonograph record of the "Ave Maria;" if he had been a poet he would have sung. It came to him that this was enough; that from nothing further could be expected a heightening of this supreme bliss; that he needn't take one step; this was enough—merely to stand still and hold her to music.

But she murmured, "Come on," and drew him gently. He stepped out and the attention he now placed on doing well dulled what there was of altogether too exquisite in his sensations. At first, not daring to do else, he merely walked forward in measure, pressing her back before him rather as a man pushes a wheelbarrow. Presently his step became less stiff, and adopted, beside the hard one-two beat, the intermediary vibrations of the music; his body relaxed. Suddenly, with great daring, he began to walk backward, letting her now come toward him, and for this gallant deed was heavenly rewarded by a small pressure upon his biceps. This altogether maddened him; he essayed a pirouette—and succeeded. The secret pressure, this time, was accompanied by a low chuckle of delight.

When they sat down, his pale-blue eyes were shining almost as brightly as her black ones, and happy dewdrops were on his brow. As for her, she was a-thrill. "You did just grand!" she declared. "Just grand—oh, I *knew* you'd make a swell dancer!"

They danced again, and then again and again, taking small hurried pecks at their food between times, and he, aware of improving from minute to minute, certain now that he was just made for this, that for years he had been hideously deceived and deprived, was seized now and then with overwhelming bursts of joyous confidence; feeling very masterful, a bit of the caveman, he whirled her vigorously.

But the old canker-worm began to wiggle. He looked at his watch. It was almost nine o'clock; he was already half an hour late! For the first time in two years, late in his call on Etta! "I guess we'll have to go," he said.

She gave him her swift appraising look, and then, as yesterday, came readily. They took the Elevated, to go faster, but when they reached his station, she got off with him. "I'll go the rest of the way on the Sub," she explained.

They stood at the foot of the stairs, while their train roared away overhead. The din fell away, there was a moment of stillness between two trains, and in that lull, she suddenly sighed and said: "Oh, let's not go home just yet! Let's go to Kelly's—they've got wonderful music there!"

THERE was in the way she emphasized the word "wonderful" something that pricked your heart. Percy hesitated, perched on the needle-point of his fate. "Have they got a phone there?" he asked.

"A phone? Of course! At Kelly's, you mean? Of *course!*"

"Well—all right then."

When they reached Kelly's, he went immediately to the telephone-booths and called up Etta. He was at the store, yes. They were taking stock. He'd have to work all the evening.

Her gentle voice, its maternal coo of sympathy, made him feel like the last of miscreants, but just then a puff of the music, forcing itself into the booth, drained him of all sensation except a wild desire to get out of this stuffy place and get to the music.

"Good night, dear," he said. "I have a lot of work to do." "Good night," the soft voice answered, far away; and he hung up,

After a while, a young man sitting alone at a table came over and asked her to dance.

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and forced himself out of the booth through some complicated door that tried to wrap itself around him.

They sat at a small table in a corner of the big hall. A red-shaded lamp was at their elbows; all the way down the effect was repeated—little red-shaded lamps scattered with an effect of secret festivity. The ceiling was low, covered with trellis and artificial vines; the floor below was like a lustrous pool carpeted with autumn leaves, and all the space between throbbed dully to the beat, subdued but stubborn, of a music which seemed to be playing within one's own resonant chest. They had been seated but half a minute when a common impulse sprang them up, linked them, and sent them gliding away.

Percy no longer had to think of his dancing. The music had him as if in a flood; he did not feel the floor at all. And in his arms, balancing softly yet with firm rhythm, she flew about with him, light as nothing to his arms, yet a heavy deliciousness upon his heart.

They danced the entire evening. Between times, of course, the Kelly system ran to form, and mysterious fluids passed in procession across their table—amber-hued, or cloudy green or lucent green, or color of silver foam. Three times she smoked a cigaret—most charmingly, he thought. When the place closed at one A.M.—this being during a swing of reform administration—his madness was complete; he called for a taxicab.

WHEN he woke up in bed a few hours later, Percy lay quiet, shrinking from what he knew would come to him in a moment. He *thought* he knew. General R. E. Morse would walk in upon him. He would have a head—people always had a head after such a performance. He would feel the lack of sleep. His nerves would be on edge. He would realize that he had spent in one evening a whole week's salary, and his heart would sink into his feet. He would think of Etta whom he had so basely deceived—oh, Lord!

He lay very quiet thus, long enough to give these things all the chance in the world to arrive, then stirred tentatively, as an animal stirs who has played possum and is surprised to find itself not really dead. Nothing, so far, had come. He kicked himself about, daringly—still nothing came. He had no head—or rather what head he had was perfectly clear. A sort of delicious emptiness was at the pit of his being—he was hungry, by Jove! Lack of sleep? He felt no lack of sleep. He felt perfectly rested. He wanted to leap out of bed. He did leap. Gee, he had not felt this way for a long, long time—he had never felt this way—clear-headed, full of life, full of zest and flame!

He sprang across the hall to the common bathroom, found it unoccupied, by chance, and intrepidly turned on the cold-water spiggot. By Jove, he felt like taking a cold bath—something he had not felt for five years! He *did* take a cold bath—something he had not done for six years. Still urged by the singular zest which possessed his nerves and his veins, he went through the calisthenic with which he had started life in New York when first he had come, and which had lasted just three weeks. His knees creaked a little; down and up, down and up he went, till the creak had ceased. Then he went shadow boxing about the room, driving before him some poor imaginary opponent bewildered with his speed. He hated to stop at all. He hated to put on his clothes. In the midst of this agitation, disconnected visions came to him of last night's doings—but these flitting pictures seemed only to increase the lightness and the joy in his heart. He had slept only five hours—well, who *wanted* to sleep more than five hours? He had spent lots of money—what was money for, anyway? And there was Etta—well, Etta was an awfully good girl, of course, an *awfully* good girl. But quiet—gee, too quiet!

He went down to breakfast a perfect vacuum, and ordered ham and eggs and hot cakes. In a vase, left over from the dinner of the preceding night, was a faded carnation. He slipped it in his buttonhole as he started for the store, and his hat went a little askew upon his head.

The wonderful feeling remained with him throughout the day. Something bubbled within him, something sang; it was difficult to hold from humming, and he did catch himself snapping his fingers like castanets once. To his delight, he found that he was no longer afraid of his customers. He wasn't afraid of them at all; he could stand on one foot in a position that possessed a certain elegance, and could discuss their choice with them in most debonair fashion. He did not avert his eyes when they raised plaintive lashes up to him; on the contrary, he looked at them with interest, warmly—and the lashes drooped again. The best thing about this small sport was that it usually brought a decision. "Well, I suppose I *will* take this," she would decide. "You say it will go well? How much shall I need—ten yards?" They took his advice; they surrendered altogether into his keeping. He had never sold so much in one day, nor so easily, nor so pleasantly. He did meet one small Waterloo when a voluminous lady, of the kind which in his mind he called a dowager, although he had no idea what dowager meant, with protruding eyes, and a chin like a waterfall, falling on a bosom like a rampart, brought him to sharply, with: "Well, young man, are you paid to look at me, or to show me silks?" But the consensus of opinion was really expressed by two much younger women, in a short dialogue delivered in the elevator on the way down. "Say," spoke the one, "don't you think he's just a bit fresh?" "Well," the other hesitated, "*may*be-ee. But he's nice, though—awfully nice. I *like* him!" "Well—I do, too!"

AT NOON he went to the bank, and drew twenty dollars from the three-hundred and sixty-four which had been supposed to become five hundred, but instead had lately become three hundred and forty-four, and by this new act became three-hundred and twenty-four; and at six o'clock he telephoned to Etta, explaining that he was, to-night, still taking stock. So, at once ballasted and lightered, he met Rosie O'Flare in front of Vegetariana, and this time with no questioning whatever, he took her to dinner. They dined at their place of the low stone vaults, then hurried to Kelly's, where they danced most of the night.

Percy's life now became a whirl. Gone out of it were the Young Mens' Protective Club, the courses in Spanish, stenography, in Will Power and Mnemotechnics; gone the simple affectionate evenings in Etta's small parlor. Daily he met Rosie O'Flare and with her danced the night away. When the stock-taking excuse had worked overtime, he invented a new and more durable one: He was taking a course in elocution at the club, and had joined the debating society. This would take all of his evenings, but, on the other hand, the course was short—just three months. "Just three months, dear, and then I can come every night once more; *every* night, and make it all up to you!" And she, with her sweet common sense, her determination to do everything possible for his future success—which some day would be *her* success—seeing him spring, in three months, from his new course, a full-fledged orator, "understood," and consented. He still went to see her every Sunday. He went with her to church, and they warbled, their rounded mouths close, their cheeks almost touching, their hands meeting on the book. In the afternoon they sang college songs in the front parlor, and stole out to see the bears. But it must be said that Percy often nodded over the "Spanish Cavalier," and blinked suspiciously before the grizzlies.

EACH Sunday, had she not been blinded by the light called love, Etta would have discerned in him a change. (But the woman who loves sees not the man she loves! When she looks at him, she sees merely something dazzling, like the sun.) Each Sunday he came, altered a little; Rosie O'Flare had taken him in hand, and was gradually reconstructing him.

Before meeting her, his tailoring had been a simple matter. He bought a suit every six months, always of blue serge. The last bought he wore on Sundays and holidays; the other he wore every day. When the every-day suit became quite worn, the Sunday suit moved down to take its place, and a new blue serge came to grace the Sundays. But now, at Rosie O'Flare's suggestion, he purchased a suit of brown tweeds, which went remarkably well with the reddish glint that played in his hair, and—this a real revolution—he put it right away to every-day wear, keeping the older blue serge for Sundays—and Etta. (It doesn't follow because a woman in love sees not the man she loves, but only a shining light, that she does not see the clothes he wears.)

Rosie also lowered his collars and loosened his ties, while rather heightening their color. She turned her attention to his hair, which he wore very short. Leaning across their table, she gave a delighted gurgle, and cried, "Why, it waves!"

"What waves?" he said, thinking of the flag.

"Your hair, your hair! When are you going to get it cut next?"

He said he was planning to have it cut tomorrow.

"Oh, wait," she pleaded. "Don't have it cut yet. Don't have it cut again till I tell you. Promise me, now; promise me!"

He promised, and waited three weeks, upon which she told him to have it only lightly trimmed and to comb it back. He obeyed, and came out of the operation a distinguished young man. She now felt herself strong enough to attack his hat which was, of course, the stiff "derby" worn by Manhattan's two-million standard

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young men. This was a more delicate venture, demanding more of her persuasive diplomacy than had the other changes, but she succeeded; the bowler was "canned"; he appeared before the world with a soft wide brim. She was delighted, and in her delight, dropped a few words of the system along which she was directing his reformation. "What you want to look like," she said, "is like some of those Washington Square guys. Not the dirty ones, *you* know, what need a shampoo all over. But like those that ain't *too* much—*you* know. Not ow-tree, but just a touch—*that's* what you want!"

At the Emporium, he was becoming a celebrity. Customers asked about him. Lofty ladies, of the floorwalker: "And who is that interesting-looking young man in the silk department?" Less lofty ladies, of one of their own kind: "Who's the swell kid behind the silk counter?" "Don't know—ain't he the artistic one, though?" "I should say. Ain't he just the goods?" The improvement in Percy was not all sartorial. As has already been explained, it was also psychological. But there was also an element which might be called physiological; he was living on beefsteaks instead of excelsior.

BEEFSTEAK, however, even in those days, cost money, and so did dancing and what goes with it—terrapins and Welsh rabbits and things. As all can see who read, Percy was on the toboggan to ruin. He kept drawing on his bank-account. He had adopted there a new method that saved worry: He had ceased deducting on the stubs of his check-book, and hence did not know at all how stood the accounting; that is how reckless Percy Skinner had become. His mind, in a whirl, carried, as a matter of fact, no concern except one, and that one came to him but seldom and with little insistence; it was the approach of the end of the mythical Club course in elocution. He was wishing now he had made it six months instead of three.

On Sunday, June fifteenth, he reached the height of folly. Up to this date, he had reserved his Sundays for Etta. But this morning, early, after directing a look of distaste at the day before him—the church, the caramels, the college songs and the bears—he suddenly seized the telephone and called up Rosie. "Say, little Rosie," he said (that is how well he knew her by that time), "what do you say we go out somewhere to-day, eh?"

"Oh, I'd *love* to!" the breathless answer came. "Oh, let's go to Coney?"

They went. Summer had broken out like an explosion; the day was warm; all New York was out in lawns and in ducks. They shot the chutes, glided the gliders, scenic-railwayed, peppered the shooting galleries, bought festoons of "dog," and in the afternoon went swimming. This was fine. She was a great little swimmer; he was not. She swam three times out to the raft, but after that, they lay in the sand side by side, and watched the ships going by. They dined on a veranda, they danced—and took a late train back.

On Monday morning, of course, Nemesis stood waiting for him.

She had probably lost the last of her patience at this last outrage of stealing poor Etta's Sunday. Anyway, she was waiting for him in the guise of a letter on the table of the hat-rack as he left his rooming-house. He did not recognize her at first, but merely stuffed her letter into his pocket and hurried on. Once behind the silk counter though, with everything running smoothly, he took out the letter and opened it.

"Well, young man, are you paid to look at me, or to show me silks?"

It was half printed. It was from his bank. It said, "Dear Sir, we beg leave to announce that your account is overdrawn the sum of twenty-four dollars and fifty-five cents ($24.55)." Something like that.

Percy discreetly replaced the notice within the envelope, slipped the envelope back into his pocket, and tried to look as he had done before opening it. But if he succeeded in looking, he could not quite feel as he had done before. A little piece of ice like a mouse kept running up and down his back without ever reaching his head, which remained hot, and inside that head, his brain persisted in rapid excursions into the past, a past altogether lurid, fantastic and impossible, yet all too true. The worst of it was that Percy Skinner had always held a theory that a piece of bad luck never comes single.

He was right. Number two was now before him in the guise of an attenuated and uniformed cash-boy. He bore a note; Percy could see it in his hand. He presented the note; Percy took it. He read it and it said: "The Management wishes to see you immediately."

"Who was it?" Percy asked of the boy, thinking that if this was the end, he might as well make sure.

"Mr. Ryan."

That killed the last doubt, and Percy went to see Mr. Ryan, the gentleman who represented the soulless corporation in its dealings with its soulful force. He knew exactly what had happened. The Punch-and-Judy sort of life he had been living of late had been found out; it probably had

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been affecting his work; he was going to be dismissed—fired, that was it! "Gee, what a fool I've been!" he thought, looking back now with clear vision. "Gee, I must have been crazy!"

Mr. Ryan, his bushy brows very bushy, was seated at his desk. He did not rise, he did not look up. And Percy stood silent, awaiting the ax.

"Say," the manager growled, still without looking up, "what's been getting into you lately, anyway? What's the recipe, eh?"

The answer would have been a long story. Percy did not answer, but just stood.

"Where did you get all that pep, anyway? You used to be a rabbit, and now you're a lion, a regular roaring lion. What is it, anyway, eh? What *is* it?"

"He's going to josh me, and *then* fire me," Percy thought; and as he had nothing to say, smiled palely, which gave him an appearance of cool, distant self-confidence—although he did not know it.

"*How would you like to travel for us?*"

Percy swayed. "What sort of a game is this?" he thought. "What sort of a game?"

"We want to work up our mail-order business. You ought to be just the man for it—you're so sleek with the skirts!"

PERCY'S stupefaction was now taken for a superior hesitation, and succeeded in raising Mr. Ryan's nose from his blotter. "Well, why don't you answer? Isn't that good enough? You didn't expect to be made president of the company first pop, did you?"

"I'd like to try it," said Percy, at last catching hold of himself.

"What? President?"

"That travel business, sir."

"Well, all right. You begin on July first. There's forty a week in it at the start. Meanwhile, you can take your summer vacation."

"Thank you—does that mean I can go right away?"

"Sure. Skip, and come see me on July first. And—wait, there's something else, Skinner."

"Yes, sir."

"The company has a new policy of interesting its employees in the business. We're putting five hundred dollars in Emporium stock to your credit. Now skip, good-by—enjoy yourself!"

AND now comes the morality, which in this case is the benefit that one may derive from Y. M. P. C. courses, especially that course which fortifies one's memory.

The course in Mnemotechnics is based on the Law of Association. Which means that in the mind, one word suggests another. For instance, it is difficult to think "paper" without immediately thinking "pen" or "ink." Or "bottle" without thinking—"milk"!

As Percy Skinner left the office of Mr. Ryan the words which were in his brain, which possessed it entirely, in fact, were "five hundred dollars" and "forty a week."

In the past, he and Etta had so firmly settled it that they would marry when he had five hundred dollars and earned forty a week, that these words, now, immediately suggested "Etta" and "marriage."

So, without further thought, like an automaton and on the instant, he went to Etta and told her they were going to marry.

She was making beds up stairs, and she came down swiftly, a little alarmed, her hair in a turban, her shapely little body in a tight smock which displayed to advantage all of its domestic virtues. And when she at last had understood what he was telling her, she buried her soft little nose under his coat lapel and wept. This suddenly showed him what he might have guessed had he been brighter, hence not a male—that, secretly, she had been quite unhappy of late—and the thought of it made him boohoo a bit too, there above her. After which, they went out, bought a ring, and were married the very next day.

On his return from the honeymoon vacation, he ran across Miss Rosie O'Flare. This was a meeting not of his own choosing; one, in fact, over the possibilities of which he had done some pondering; but which proved much easier than he had expected. She came running after him—he had tried to pass her without seeing her—held out her hand, and with a sweet frankness that altogether reassured him, cried:

"Congratulations, Mr. Skinner, congratulations!"

They spoke a few nothings, and then came to a dangerous Nothing. They stood on a corner, in the traffic, silent and pensive. "Well," she said, finally, "we had a good time, anyway; didn't we, Percy?"

"We certainly did," he said heavily.

"And *that's* a whole lot, isn't it, Percy?"

"You bet."

She looked away down the street, then added slowly, "You know, Percy, I think I did you a lot of good. You don't know it now, but you will *some* day, Percy!"

"I do now," he protested.

"Oh, no, you don't! And she—what's her name, Percy?"

"Etta."

"Etta? A sweet name! And she, Percy—well, I've done *her* good too, a lot of good. But she—well, she'll *never* know it, Percy!"

The Brain War

IN THE June EVERYBODY'S will begin a most important series of articles unfolding a dramatic picture of the secret warfare waged behind the actual battle-lines, about royal thrones, in European chancelleries, and in Continental capitals. The revelations are startling, and the author, Captain Ferdinand Tuohy, is well qualified by his experience as a war correspondent for the London *Daily Mail* and as special agent of the British War Department. His story of the subtle methods of international espionage describes a continuous duel of wits that often held the fate of nations in the balance.

EVERYBODY'S for June will also contain seven complete fiction stories, among them:

Clarence B. Kelland

"Cheese in the Trap"

THE author of "Knots and Windshakes," in EVERYBODY'S for April, contributes another lumber-camp story—this time a dramatic tale of a mysterious murder in the woods, of some keen detective work by a lumberjack foreman, and of a thrilling climax in a back-country court-room.

Bozeman Bulger

"Real Shine"

THE come-back of a veteran big-leaguer. Batters were beginning to "find" him and a heartless manager saw no good in a certain vaudeville dancer. Then came service in France, a "hunch" resulting from a study of projectiles, and finally the development of a most deceptive shine ball.

Frederick Orin Bartlett

"A Strip of Green Paper"

THE author of the "Later Boat," which appeared in last month's EVERYBODY'S, here tells the story of a wealthy, hard-working father, of a pleasure-loving, self-confident son, and of the inevitably painful parting that proved a blessing in disguise for both. A tense situation, skilfully presented.

Marion McCrea

"Miss Vannah of Our Ad-Shop"

ANOTHER new fiction writer—an EVERYBODY'S discovery—tells a lively business story of a temperamental lady copy writer who breezed into the advertising agency of a hard-headed Scotchman and shocked his whole staff into life and prosperity by methods as unique as her own vivid personality.

Ruth Sawyer

"Simple Simon of the Fourth Dimension"

THE romance of a good-natured giant who was the laughing-stock of his community until designing females appeared on the scene. How the guileless Simon was nearly taken in, the enemy routed, and the tables finally turned is a most entertaining illustration of poetic justice.

Gordon Arthur Smith

"They All Go Mad in June"

THE sprightly tale of a summer romance involving two young folks who relished a fight. There is an engaging, devil-may-care, twentieth-century troubadour in the hero's rôle, a domineering damsel in distress, and a situation full of possibilities. A delightful story told by a new writer of great promise.

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Dickie sat amidst his crumpled, dingy bedclothes, his eyes fixed anxiously upon Sylvester.

Hidden Creek

By Katharine Newlin Burt

Author of "The Branding-Iron"

II

CHAPTER SIX

The Bawling Out

DICKIE'S room in the Aura Hotel was fitted in between the men's lavatory and the linen-room. It smelt of soiled linen and defective plumbing. Also into its single narrow window rose the dust of ashes, of old rags and other refuse thrown light-heartedly into the back yard, which not being visible from the street, supplied the typical housewife of a frontier town with that relaxation from any necessity to keep up an appearance of economy and cleanliness so desirable to her liberty-loving soul. The housekeeper at the Aura was not Mrs. Hudson, but an enormously stout young woman with blond hair, named Amelia Plecks. She was so tightly laced and booted that her hard breathing and creaking were audible all over the hotel. When Dickie woke in his narrow room after his moonlight adventure, he heard this heavy breathing in the linen-room, and groaning, thrust his head under the pillow. With whatever bitterness his kindly heart could entertain, he loathed Amelia. She took advantage of the favor of Sylvester and of her own exalted position in the hotel to taunt and to humiliate him. His plunge under the pillow did not escape her notice.

"Ain't you up yet, lazybones?" she cried,

THE STORY

SHEILA ARUNDEL, the seventeen-year-old daughter of the artist, Marcus Arundel, a shy, elf-like, elusive creature, is left alone in the world by the death of her father. Sylvester Hudson, the owner of a chain of rather disreputable hotels in the West, has bought a picture from Arundel, and calls for it the day after the artist's death. He then meets Sheila for the first time, and persuades her to go with him to his home in Millings, ostensibly to help his wife and his daughters, Girlie and Babe, with the housework.

Hudson's son, Dickie, clerk in the Aura Hotel, is an habitual drunkard, but sweet-natured and gentle, with a love of beauty and a poetic sense which his father vainly tries to suppress. When he first meets Sheila he has been drinking and frightens her, and Hudson strikes him. Sheila intercedes for Dickie. Hudson, for the first time, hints at some secret reason which he had for bringing her to Millings—some way by which, under his guidance, she is to exert a wonderful influence for good over the town.

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rapping on the wall. "You won't get no breakfast. It's half-past seven. Who's at the desk to see them Duluth folks off? Pap's not going to be pleased with you."

"I don't want any breakfast," muttered Dickie.

Amelia laughed. "No. I'll be bound you don't. Tongue like a kitten and a head like a cracked stove!"

She slapped down some clean sheets on a shelf and creaked toward the hall, but stopped at the open door. Sylvester Hudson was coming down the passage, and she was in no mind to miss the "bawling out" of Dickie which this visit must portend. She shut the linen-room door softly therefore, and controlled her breathing.

BUT Dickie knew that she was there, and, when his father rapped, he knew why she was there.

He tumbled wretchedly from his bed, swore at his injured ankle, hopped to the door, unlocked it, and hopped back with panic swiftness before his father's entrance. He sat in his crumpled pajamas amidst his crumpled, dingy bedclothes, his hair scattered over his forehead, his large heavy eyes fixed anxiously upon Sylvester.

"Say, Poppa," he began. Then Pap's voice cracked out at him.

"You hold your tongue," snapped Sylvester, "or you'll get what's coming to you." He jerked Dickie's single chair from against the wall, threw the clothing from it and sat down, crossing his legs and holding up at his son the long finger that had frightened Sheila. Dickie blinked at it.

"You know what I was planning to do to you after last night? I meant to come round here and pull you out of your covers and onto the floor there," he pointed to a spot on the boards to which Dickie fearfully directed his own eyes, "and kick the stuffing out of you." Dickie contemplated the long-pointed russet shoes of his parent and shuddered visibly. Nevertheless, in the slow look he lifted from the boot to his father's face there was a faint gleam of irony.

"What made you change your mind?" he asked impersonally.

It was this curious detachment of Dickie's, this imperturbability, that most infuriated Hudson. He flushed.

"Just a little sass from you will bring me back to the idea," he said sharply.

Dickie lowered his eyes.

"What made me change was—Miss Arundel's kindness. She came and begged you off. She said you hadn't done anything or said anything to frighten her, that you'd been—" Sylvester drawled out the two words in the singsong of the West's mockery—" 'sweet and love-ly.' "

Dickie's face was pink. He began to tie a knot in the corner of one of his thin gray sheet-blankets.

"I don't know how sweet and lovely you can be, Dickie, when you're lit up, but I guess you were awful sweet. Anyway, if you didn't say anything or do anything to scare her, you don't deserve a kicking. But just the same, I've a mind to turn you out of Millings."

This time Dickie's look was not ironical. It was terrified. "Oh, Poppa, say! I'll try not to do it again."

"I never heard that before, did I?" sneered Sylvester. "You put shame on me and my bar. And I'm not going to stand it. If you want to get drunk, buy a bottle and come up here in your room. Damn you! You're a nice son for the owner of the Aura!"

He stood up and looked with frank disgust at the thin huddled figure. Under this look Dickie grew slowly redder and his eyes watered. Sylvester lifted his upper lip. "Faugh!" he said. He walked over to the door.

"Get up and go down to your job and don't you bother Miss Sheila, hear me? Keep away from her. She's not used to your sort and you'll disgust her. She's here under my protection and I've got my plans for her. I'm her guardian—that's what I am." Sylvester was pleased, like a man that has made a discovery. "Her guardian," he repeated, as though the word had a fine taste.

Dickie watched him. There was no expression whatever in his face, and his lips stood vacantly apart. He might have been seven years old.

"Keep away from her—hear me?"

"Yes, sir," said Dickie meekly.

After his father had gone out Dickie sat for an instant with his head on one side, listening intently. Then he got up, limped quietly and quickly on his bare feet out into the hall, and locked the linen-room door on the outside.

"Amelia's clean forgot to lock it," he said aloud. "Ain't she careless, though, this morning!"

He went back. There was certainly a sound now behind the partition, a sound of hard breathing that could no longer be controlled.

"I'll hand the key over to Mary," soliloquized Dickie in the hollow and unnatural voice of stage confidences. "She'll be going in for the towels about noon."

Then he fell on his bed and smothered a fit of chuckling.

SUDDENLY the mirth died out of him. He lay still, conscious of a pain in his head and in his ankle and somewhere else—an indeterminate spot deep in his being. He had been forbidden to see the girl who ran away out into the night to look at the stars, the girl who had not laughed at his attempt to describe the white ecstasy of the winter moon. He had frightened her—disgusted her. He must have been more drunk than he imagined. It *was* disgusting—and so hopeless. Perhaps it would be better to leave Millings.

He sat up on the edge of his bed and let his hands hang limply down between his knees. It seemed to him that his thoughts were like a wheel half submerged in running water. The wheel went round rapidly, plunging in and out of his consciousness. Hardly had he grasped the meaning of one half when it went under and another blur of moving spokes emerged. Something his father had said, for instance, now began to pass through his mind: "I've got my plans for her." Dickie tried to stop the turning wheel, because this speech gave him a distinct feeling of anger and alarm. By an effort of his will he held it before his contemplation. What possible plans could Sylvester have for Sheila? Did she understand his plans? Did she approve of them? She was so young and small, with that sad, soft mouth and those shining, misty eyes. Dickie, with almost a paternal air, shook his ruffled head. He shut his eyes so that the long lashes stood out in little points. A vision of those two faces, Sheila's so gleaming fair and open, Sylvester's so dark and shut, stood there to be compared. Her guardian, indeed!

Dickie dressed slowly and dragged himself down to the desk, where very soberly and sadly he gave the key of the linen-room to Mary. Then he sat down, turned on the Victor and lit a cigaret. The "Duluth folks" had gone without any assistance from him. There was nothing to do. It occurred to Dickie all at once that in Millings there was always nothing to do. Nothing, that is, for *him* to do. Perhaps after all he didn't like Millings. Perhaps that was what was wrong with him.

The Victor was playing:

"Here comes Tootsie,
Play a little music on the band.
Here comes Tootsie.
Tootsie, you are looking simply grand.
Ripple up a rag on the piccolo and flutes.
For the man who wrote the rag wrote it especially for Toots.
Here comes Tootsie—play a little music on the band."

On the last nasal note the door of the Aura flew open, and a resplendent figure crossed the chocolate-colored varnish of the floor. Tootsie herself was not more "simply grand." This was a young man, perhaps it would be more descriptive to say *the* young man, that accompanies *the* young woman on the cover of the average American magazine. He had a nose, a chin, a beautiful mouth, large brown eyes, wavy chestnut hair, a ruddy complexion and, what is not always given to the young man on the cover, a deep and generous dimple in the ruddiest part of his right cheek. He was dressed in the latest suit of a tailor's advertisement; he wore a tie of variegated silk which, like Browning's star, dartled now red, now blue. The silk handkerchief which protruded carefully from his breast pocket also dartled. So did the socks. One felt that the heart of this young man matched his tie and socks. It was resplendent with the vanity and hopefulness and illusions of twenty-two years. The large dingy chocolate-colored lobby became suddenly a background to Mr. James Greely, cashier of the Millings National Bank and the only child of its president.

UPON the ruffled and rumpled Dickie he smiled pleasantly, made a curious gesture with his hand—they both belonged to the Knights of Sagittarius and the Fire Brigade—and came to lean upon the desk.

"Holiday at the bank this morning," he said, "in honor of Dad's wedding anniversary. We're giving a dance to-night in the Hall. Want to come, Dickie?"

"No," said Dickie, "I hurt my ankle last night on the icy pavement. And anyhow I can't dance. And I sort of find girls kind of tiresome."

"That's too bad. I'm sure sorry for you, Hudson. Particularly as I came here just for the purpose of handing you over the cutest little billy-doo you ever saw."

He drew out of his pocket an envelope, and held it away from Dickie.

"You're trying to job me, Jim"—but Dickie had his head coaxingly on one side, and his face was pink.

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It was not easy, even with Babe's good-humored help, to go down and submit to Mrs. Hudson's hectoring.

"I'll give it to you if you can guess the sender."

"Babe?"

"Wrong."

"Girlie?"

"Well, sir, it ain't Girlie's fist—not the fist she uses when she drops *me* billy-doos."

Dickie's eyes fell. He turned aside in his chair and stopped the grinding of the graphophone. He made no further guess. Jim, with his dimple deepening, tossed the small paper into the air and caught it again deftly.

"It's from the young lady from Noo York who's helping Mrs. Hudson," he said. "I guess she's kind of wishful for a beau. She's not much of a looker, Girlie tells me."

"Haven't you met her yet, Jim?" Dickie's hands were in his pockets, but his eyes followed the gyrations of the paper.

"No. Ain't that a funny thing, too? Seems like I never get round to it. I just saw her peeping at me one day through the parlor curtains while I was saying sweet nothings to Girlie on the porch. I guess she was kind of in-ter-ested. She's skinny and pale, Girlie says. Your mother hasn't got any use for her. I bet you it won't be long before she makes tracks back to Noo York, Dickie. Girlie says she won't be lingering on here much longer. Too much competition."

Jim handed the note to Dickie, who had listened to this speech with his seven-year-old expression. He made no comment, but silently unfolded Sheila's note.

The writing itself was like her, slender and fine and straight, a little reckless, daintily desperate. That "I," now, on the white paper, might be Sheila skimming across the snow.

MY DEAR DICKIE—Somehow I can't call you "Mr. Hudson." I am so terribly sorry about the way I acted to you last night. I don't know why I was so foolish. I have tried to explain to your father that you did nothing and said nothing to frighten me, that you were very polite and kind, but I am afraid he doesn't quite understand. I hope he won't be very cross with you, because it was all my fault—no, not quite all, because I think you oughtn't to have followed me. I'm sure you're sorry that you did. But it was a great deal my fault, so I'm writing this to tell you that I wasn't really frightened nor very angry. Just sorry and disappointed. Because I thought you were so very nice. And not like Millings. And you liked the mountains better than the town. I wanted—I still want—you to be my friend. For I do need a friend here dreadfully. Will you come to see me some afternoon? I hope you didn't hurt yourself when you slipped on those icy steps.

Sincerely,

SHEILA ARUNDEL.

Dickie put the note into his pocket and looked unseeingly at Jim. Jim was turning up the bottoms of his trousers preparing to go.

"So you won't come to our dance?" he asked straightening himself, more ruddy than ever.

"Well, sir," said Dickie slowly and indifferently, "I wouldn't wonder if I would."

CHAPTER SEVEN

Dish-washing

ON THAT night while all Millings was preparing itself for the Greelys' dance; while Dickie, bent close to his cracked mirror, was tying his least-crumpled tie with not too steady fingers; while Jim was applying to his brown crest a pomade sent to him by a girl in Cheyenne; while Babe was wondering anxiously whether green slippers could be considered a match or a foil to a dress of turquoise blue; while Girlie touched her cream gold hair with cream-padded fingertips, Sheila Arundel prowled about her room with hot anger and cold fear in her heart.

Nothing perhaps in all this mysterious world is so inscrutable a mystery as the mind of early youth. It crawls, the beetle-creature, in a hard shell, hiding the dim inner struggle of its growing wings, moving numbly as if in a torpid dream. It has forgotten the lively grub-stage of childhood, and it can not foresee the dragon-fly adventure just ahead. First it suffers darkly and dimly the pain of growth, and then it suffers the sharp agony of a splitting shell, the dazzling wounds of light, the torture of first moving its feeble wings. It drags itself from its shell, it clings to its perch, it finds itself born anew into the world.

When Sheila had left the studio with Sylvester she was not yet possessed of wings. Now the shell was cracking, the dragon-fly adventure about to begin. To

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a changed world, changed stars—the heavens above and the earth beneath were strange to her that night.

It had begun, this first piercing contact with reality, rudely enough. Mrs. Hudson had helped to split the protecting shell which had saved Sheila's growing dreams. Perhaps "Momma" had her instructions, perhaps it was only her own disposition left by her knowing husband to do his trick for him. Sheila had not overstated the unhappiness that Mrs. Hudson's evident dislike had caused her. In fact, she had greatly understated it. From the first moment at the station when the hard eyes had looked her over and the harsh voice had asked about "the girl's trunk," Sheila's sensitiveness had begun to suffer. It was not easy, even with Babe's good-humored help, to go down into the kitchen and submit to Mrs. Hudson's hectoring.

MOMMA had the insolence of the under dog. Of her daughters, as of her husband, she was very much afraid. They all bullied her, Babe with noisy cheerful effrontery—and Girlie with a soft unyielding tyranny that had the smothering pressure of a large silk pillow.

Girlie was tall and serious and beautiful, the proud possessor of what Millings called "a perfect form." She was inexpressibly slow, untidy, vain and ignorant and self-absorbed. At this time her whole being was centered upon the attentions of Jim Greely, with whom she was "keeping company." With Jim Greely in her mind she had looked Sheila over, thin and weary Sheila in her shabby black dress, and had decided that here no danger threatened. Nevertheless she did not take chances. Sheila had been in Millings a fortnight and had not met the admirable Jim. Her attempt that morning to send the note to Dickie by Jim was exactly the action that led to the painful splitting of her shell.

She had seen from her window Sylvester's departure after breakfast. There was something in his grim angular figure, moving carefully over the icy pavement in the direction of the hotel, that gave her a pang for Dickie. She was sure that Hudson was going to be very disagreeable in spite of her attempt to soften his anger.

She was sorry that Dickie, with his odd, wistful, friendly face and his eyes so wide and youthful and apologetic for their visions, should think that she was angry or disgusted. She wrote her letter in a little glow of rescue, and was proud of the tact of that reference to his "fall down the steps," for she reasoned that the self-esteem of any boy of nineteen must suffer poignantly over the memory of being knocked down by his father before the eyes of a strange girl. She wrote her note and ran down the stairs, then stopped to wonder how she could get it promptly to Dickie. It was intended as a poultice to be applied after the "bawling-out," and she could not very well take it to him herself. She knew that he worked in the hotel, and the hotel was just around the corner. All that was needed was a messenger.

She was standing, pink of cheek and vague of eye, fingering her apron like a cottage-child and nibbling at the corner of her envelope, the light from a window on the stairs falling on the jewel-like polish of her hair, when Girlie opened the door of the "parlor" and came out into the hall. Girlie saw her and half closed the door. Her lazy eyes, as reflective and receptive and inexpressive as small meadow pools under a summer sky, rested upon Sheila. In the parlor a pleasant baritone voice was singing—

> "Treat me nice, Miss Mandy Jane,
> Treat me nice.
> Don't you know I'se not to blame,
> Lovers all act just the same,
> Treat me nice . . ."

Girlie's fingers tightened on the door-knob.

"What do you want, Sheila?" she asked, and into the slow, gentle tones of her voice something had crept, something sinuous and subtle, something that slid into the world with Lilith for the eternal torment of earth's daughters.

"I want to send this note to your brother," said Sheila with the simplicity of the aristocrat. "Is that Mr. Greely? Is he going past the hotel?"

She took a step toward Jim, but Girlie held out her soft long hand.

"Give it to me. I'll ask him."

Sheila surrendered the note.

"You'd better get back to the dishes," said Girlie over her shoulder. "Momma's kind of rushed this morning. She's helping Babe with her party dress. I wouldn't 'a' put in my time writing notes to Dickie to-day if I'd 'a' been you. Sort of risky."

She slid in through the jealous door, and Sheila hurried along the hall to the kitchen, where there was an angry clash and clack of crockery.

THE kitchen was furnished almost entirely with blue-flowered oilcloth; the tables were covered with it, the floor was covered with it, the shelves were draped in it. Cold struck up through the shining clammy surface underfoot, so that while Sheila's face burned from the heat of the stove, her feet were icy. The back door was warped and let in a current of frosty air over its sill, a draft that encircled her ankles like cold metal. On the table in the middle of the room Momma had placed an enormous tin dish-pan piled high with dirty dishes, over which she was pouring the contents of the kettle. Steam rose in clouds, half veiling her big fierce face, which, seen through holes in the vapor, was like that of a handsome, vulgar witch.

Through the steam she shot at Sheila a cruel look. "Aren't you planning to do any work to-day, Sheila?" she asked in her voice of harsh monotonous accents. "Here it's nine o'clock, and I ain't been able to do a stroke to Babe's dress. I dunno what you was designed for in this house—an ornament on the parlor mantel, I guess."

Sheila's heart suffered one of the terrible swift enlargements of angry youth. It seemed to fill her chest and stop her breath, forcing water to her eyes. She could not speak, but went quickly up and took the kettle from Momma's red hand.

The table at which dish-washing was done was inconveniently high. When the big dish-pan with its piled dishes topped it, Sheila's arms and back were strained over her work. She usually pulled up a box on which she stood, but now she went to work blindly, her teeth clenched, her flexible red lips set close to cover them. The Celtic fire of her Irish blood gave her eyes a sort of phosphorescent glitter. Momma looked at her.

"Don't show temper," she said. "What were you doin'? Up-stairs work?"

"I was writing a letter," said Sheila in a low voice, beginning to wash the plates and shrinking at the pain of the scalding water.

"Humph! Writing letters at this hour! One of your friends back East? I thought it was about time somebody was lookin' you up. What do your acquaintance think of you comin' West with Sylly?"

Now that she was at liberty to put a "stroke" of work on Babe's dress, Momma seemed in no particular hurry to do so. She stood in the middle of the kitchen, wrapping her great bony arms in her checked apron and staring at Sheila. Her eyes were like Girlie's turned to stone, as blank and blind as living eyes can be.

Sheila did not answer. She was white and her hands shook.

"Humph!" said Momma again. "We aren't goin' to talk about our acquaintance, are we? Well, some folks' acquaintance don't bear talkin' about; they're either too fine or they ain't the kind that gets into decent conversation." She walked away.

Sheila did her work, holding her anger and her misery away from her, refusing to look at them, to analyze their cause. It was a very busy day. The help Babe usually gave, and Momma's more effectual assistance, were not to be had. Twice Sheila cleaned up the kitchen, swept the dining-room and set the table, and in the end cooked the supper. Her exquisite French omelette and savory baked tomatoes were reviled. The West knows no cooking but its own, and like all victims of uneducated taste, it prefers the familiar bad to the unfamiliar good.

"You've spoiled a whole can of tomatoes," said Babe. Sylvester laughed good-humoredly: "Oh, well, Miss Sheila, you'll learn!" This, to Sheila, whose omelette had been taught her by Mimi Lolotte and whose baked tomatoes, delicately flavored with onion, were something to dream about. And she had toasted the bread golden brown and buttered it, and she had made a delectable vegetable soup!

She had never before been asked to cook a meal at No. 18 Cottonwood Avenue, and she was eager to please Sylvester. His comment, "you'll learn," fairly took her breath. She would not sit down with them at the table, but hurried back into the kitchen, put her cheek against some cold linoleum, and cried.

BY THE time supper was over and more dishes ready to be washed, the cook's wounded pride was under control. Her few tears had left no marks on her face. Babe, helping her, did not even know that there had been a shower.

Babe was excited; her chewing was more energetic even than usual. It smacked audibly.

"Say, Sheila, wot'll you wear to-night?" she yelled above the clatter.

"Wear?" repeated Sheila.

"To the dance, you silly! What did you think I meant—to bed?"

Sheila's tired pallor deepened a little. "I am not going to the dance."

"Not going?" Babe put down a plate.

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"What do you mean? Of course you're going! You've gotta go. Say—Momma, Pap, Girlie—" she ran at a sort of sliding gallop across the oilcloth, through the swinging door into the dining-room—"will you listen to this? Sheila says she's not going to the dance."

"Well," said Momma audibly, "she'd better. I'm agoin' to put out the fires, and the house'll be about 12 below."

Sylvester murmured, "Oh, we must change that." And Girlie said nothing.

"Well," vociferated Babe, "I call it too mean for words. I've just set my heart on her meeting some of the folks, and getting to know Millings. She's been here a whole two weeks and she hasn't met a single fellow but Dickie, and he don't count, and she hasn't even got friendly with any of the girls. And I wanted her to see one of our real swell affairs. Why, just for the credit of Millings, she's gotter go."

"Why fuss her about it, if she don't want to?" Girlie's soft voice was poured like oil on the troubled billows of Babe's outburst.

"I'll see to her." Sylvester's chair scraped the floor as he rose. "I know how to manage gels. Trust Poppa!"

HE PUSHED through the door, followed by Babe. Sheila looked up at him helplessly. She had her box under her feet, and so was not entirely hidden by the dish-pan. She drew up her head and faced him.

"Mr. Hudson," she began, "please! I can't go to a dance. You know I can't——"

"Nonsense!" said Pap. "In the bright lexicon of youth there's no such word as 'can't.' Say, girl, you can and you must. I won't have Babe crying her eyes out and myself the most unpopular man in Millings. Say, leave your dishes and go up and put on your best duds."

"That's talking," commented Babe.

In the dining-room Momma said "Humph!" and Girlie was silent.

Sheila looked at her protector. "But you see, Mr. Hudson, I—I—it was only a month ago—" She made a gesture with her hands to show him her black dress, and her lips trembled.

Pap walked round to her and patted her shoulder. "I know," he said. "I savvy. I get you, little girl. But say, it won't do. You've got to begin to live again and brighten up. You're only seventeen, and that's no age for mourning, no, nor moping. You must learn to forget, at least, that is—" for he saw the horrified pain of her eyes—"that is, to be happy again. Yes'm. Happiness—that's got to be your middle name. Now, Miss Sheila, as a favor to me!"

Sheila put up both her hands and pushed his from her shoulder. She ran from him past Babe into the dining-room, where, as she would have sped by, Momma caught her by the arm.

"If you're not aiming to please *him*," said Momma harshly, "wot are you here for?"

Sheila looked at her unseeingly, pulled herself away and went up-stairs on wings. In her room the tumult, held down all through the ugly, cluttered, drudging day, broke out and had its violent course. She flew about the room or tossed on the bed, sobbing and whispering to herself. Her wound bled freely for the first time since it had been given her by death. She called to her father, and her heart writhed in the grim talons of its loneliness. That was her first agony, and then came the lesser stings of Momma's insults, and at last a fear. An incomprehensible fear. She began to doubt the wisdom of her Western venture. She began to be terrified at her situation. All about her lay a frozen world, a wilderness, so many thousands of miles from anything that she and her father had ever known. And in her pocket there was no penny for rescue or escape. Over her life brooded powerfully Sylvester Hudson, with his sallow face and gentle, contemplative eyes. He had brought her to his home. Surely that was an honorable and generous deed. He had given her over to the care and protection of his wife and daughters.

But why didn't Mrs. Hudson like it? Why did she tighten her lips and pull in her nostrils when she looked at her helper? And what was the sinister inner meaning of those two speeches about the purpose of her being in the house at all? "An ornament on the parlor mantel,"—"aiming to please him"? Of the existence of a sinister inner meaning, Momma's voice and look left no doubt.

Something was wrong. Something was hideously wrong. And to whom might she go for help or for advice? As though to answer her question came a footstep on the stair. It was a slow, not very heavy, step. It came to her door, and there followed a sharp but gentle rap.

"Who is it?" asked Sheila. And suddenly she felt very weak.

"It's Pap. Open your door, girl."

She hesitated. Her head seemed to go round. Then she obeyed his gentle request.

Pap walked into the room.

"Don't show temper!" said Momma, "what were you doin'?"

CHAPTER EIGHT

Artists

PAP closed the door carefully behind him before he looked at Sheila. At once his face changed to one of deep concern.

"Why, girl, what's happened to you? You got no call to feel like that!"

He went over to her and took her limp hand. She half turned away. He patted the hand.

"Why, girl, this isn't very pleasant for me. I aimed to make you happy when I brought you out to Millings. I kind of wanted to work myself into your poppa's place; kind of meant to make it up to you some way. I aimed to give you a home. 'Home, sweet home, there's no place like home'—that was my motto. And here

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you are, all pale around the gills, and tears all over your face—and say, there's a regular pool there on your pillow. Now, now"—he clicked with his tongue. "You're a bad girl, a regular bad, ungrateful girl, hanged if you aren't. You know what I'd do to you if you were as young as you are little and foolish? Smack you, good and plenty. But I'm not agoing to do it, no, ma'am. Don't pull your hand away. Smacking's not in my line. I never smacked my own children in their lives, except Dickie. There was no other way with him. He was ornery. You come and set down here in the big chair and I'll pull up the little one and we'll talk things over. Put your trust in me, Miss Sheila. I'm all heart. I wasn't called 'Pap' for nothing. You know what I am? I'm your guardian. Yes'm. And you just got to make up your mind to cast your care upon me, as the hymn says. Nary worry must you keep to yourself. Come on now, kid, out with it! Get it off your chest."

Sheila had let him put her into the big creaking leather chair. She sat with a handkerchief clenched in both her hands, upon which he, drawing up the other chair, now placed one of his. She kept her head down, for she was ashamed of the pale, stained and distorted little face which she could not yet control.

"Now then, girl—Well, if you won't talk to me, I'll just light up and wait. I'm a patient man, I am. Don't hurry yourself any."

He withdrew his hand and took out a cigar. In a moment he was sitting on the middle of his spine, his long legs sprawled half across the room, his hands in his pockets, his head on the chair back, so that his chin pointed up to the ceiling. Smoke rose from him as from a volcano.

Sheila presently laughed uncertainly.

"That's better," he mumbled around his cigar.

"I've had a dreadful day," said Sheila.

"You won't have any more of them, my dear," Sylvester promised quietly.

She looked at him with faint hope.

"Yes'm, dish-washing's dead."

"But what can I do, then?"

Hudson nodded his head slowly, or rather, he sawed the air up and down with his chin. He was still looking at the ceiling, so that Sheila could see only the triangle beneath his jaw and the dark stringy neck above his collar.

"I've got a job for you, girl, a real one."

He pulled out his cigar and sat up. "You remember what I told you the other night?"

"ABOUT my being a—a—beacon?" Sheila's voice was delicately tinged with mockery. So was her doubtful smile.

"Yes'm," he said seriously. "Well, that's it."

"What does a beacon do?" she asked.

"It burns. It shines. It looks bright. It wears the neatest little black dress with a frilly apron and deep frilly cuffs. Say, do you recollect something else I told you?"

"I remember everything you told me."

"Well, ma'am, I remember everything you told *me*. Somebody said she was grateful. Somebody said she'd do anything for Pap. Somebody said—'Try me.'"

"I meant it, Mr. Hudson. I did mean it."

"Do you mean it now?"

"Yes. I—I owe you so much. You're always so very kind to me. And I behave very badly. I was hateful to you this evening. And, when you came to my door just now I was—I was *scared*."

Pap opened his eyes at her, held his cigar away from him and laughed. The laugh was both bitter and amused.

"Scared of Pap Hudson? *You* scared? But look-a-here, girl! What've I done to deserve that?"

He sat forward, rested his chin in his hand supported by an elbow on his crossed knees, and fixed her with gentle and reproachful eyes.

"Honest, you kind of make me feel bad, Miss Sheila."

"I am dreadfully sorry. It was horrid of me. I only told you because I wanted you to know that I'm not worth helping. I don't deserve you to be so kind to me. I—I must be disgustingly suspicious."

"WELL!" Sylvester sighed. "Very few folks get me. I'm kind of misunderstood. I'm a real lonesome sort of man. But, honest, Miss Sheila, I thought you were my friend. I don't mind telling you you've hurt my feelings. That shot kind of got me. It's stuck into me."

"I'm horrid!" Sheila's eyes were wounded with remorse.

"Oh well, I'm not expecting understanding any more."

"Oh but I do—I do understand!" she said eagerly, and she put her hand shyly on his arm. "I think I do understand you. I'm very grateful. I'm very fond of you."

"Ah!" said Sylvester softly. "That's good hearing!" He lifted his arm with Sheila's hand on it and touched it with his lips. "You got me plum' stirred up," he said with a certain huskiness. "Well!" She took away her hand and he made a great show of returning to common sense. "I reckon we are a pretty good pair of friends after all. But you mustn't be scared of me, Miss Sheila. That *does* hurt. Let's forget you told me that."

"Yes—please!"

"Well then—to get back to business. Do you recollect a story I told you?"

"A story? Oh, yes—about an Englishman——?"

"Yes, ma'am. That Englishman put his foot on the rail and stuck his glass in his eye and set his tumbler down empty. And he looked round that bar of mine, Miss Sheila. You savvy, he'd been all over the globe, that feller, and I should say his ex-perience of bars was some, and he said, 'Hudson, it's all but perfect. It only needs one thing.'"

This time Sheila did not ask. She waited.

"'And that's something we have in our country,' said he." Hudson cleared his throat. He also moistened his lips. He was very apparently excited. He leaned even further forward, tilting on the front legs of his chair and thrusting his face close to Sheila's. "'*A pretty barmaid!*' said he."

There was a profound silence in the small room. The runners of a sleigh scraped the icy street below, its horses' hoofs cracked noisily. The music of a fiddle sounded in the distance. Babe's voice humming a waltz tune rose from the second story.

"A barmaid?" asked Sheila breathlessly. She got up from her chair and walked over to the window. The moon was already high. Over there, beckoning, stood her mountain and her star. It was all so shining and pure and still.

"That's what you want me to be—your barmaid?"

"Yes'm," said Sylvester humbly. "Don't make up your mind in a hurry, Miss Sheila. Wait till I tell you more about it. It's—it's a kind of dream of mine. I think it'd come close to breaking me up if you turned down the proposition. The Aura's not an ordin-ar-y bar and I'm not an ordin-ar-y man, and say, Miss Sheila, you're not an ordin-ar-y girl."

"Is that why you want me to work in your saloon?" said Sheila, staring at the star.

"Yes'm. That's why. Let me tell you that I've searched this continent for a girl to fit my ideal. That's what it is, girl—my ideal. That bar of mine has got to be perfect. It's near to perfect now. I want, when that Englishman comes back to Millings, to hear him say, 'It's perfect'—no 'all but,' you notice. Why, miss, I could a got a hundred ordinary girls; lookers too. The world's full of lookers."

"Why didn't you offer your 'job' to Babe or Girlie?"

SYLVESTER laughed. "Well, girl, as a matter of fact I did."

"You did!" Sheila turned back and faced him. There was plenty of color in her cheeks now. Her narrow eyes were widely opened. Astonishingly large and clear they were when she so opened them.

"Yes'm." Sylvester glanced aside for an instant.

"And what did they say?"

"They balked," Sylvester admitted calmly. "They're fine girls, Miss Sheila. And they're lookers. But they just aren't quite fine enough. They're not artists, like your poppa and like you—and like me."

Sheila put a hand up to her cheek. Her eyes came back to their accustomed narrowness, and a look of doubt stole into her face.

"Artists?"

"Yes'm." Sylvester had begun to walk about. "Artists. Why, what's an artist but a person with a dream he wants to make real? My dream's the Aura, girl. For three years now—" he half-shut his eyes and moved his arm in front of him as though he were putting in the broad first lines of a picture, "I've seen that girl there back of my bar, shining and *good* and fine, not the sort of a girl a man'd be looking for mind you, just *not* that! A girl that would sort of take your breath. Say, picture it, Sheila!" He stood by her and pointed it out as though he showed her a view. "You're a cowboy. And you come ridin' in, bone-tired, dusty, with a *thirst!* Well sir, a thirst in your throat and a thirst in your heart and a thirst in your soul. You're wantin' re-freshment. For your body and your eyes and your mind. Well, ma'am, you tie your pony up there and you push open those doors and you step plum' into paradise. It's cool in there—I'm picturin' a July evening, Miss Sheila—and it's quiet and it's shining clean. And there's a big man in white who's serving drinks—cold drinks with a grand smell.

(*Continued on page 82*)

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The Colyumists' Confessional

V. Philander Johnson, *by Himself*

SEEING ourselves as others see us is an easy thing compared to an effort at persuading others to see us as we see ourselves.

Jocose references to my appearance as I sat at my desk engaged in writing daily what may be called a "colyum" aroused me to resentful contradiction. The camera was brought, unannounced, by office neighbors. The window-shades were pulled down and a veritable likeness was boomed out by a snapshot man whose business it has long been to assist people in not taking themselves too seriously.

I was at the moment engaged in writing what I was firmly resolved would be the last "joke" I should ever attempt. Every day of writing brings this feeling of resolute finality; and for over thirty years each to-morrow has brought yielding to the Rip Van Winkle-like temptation not to count this one. Each three hundred and sixty-five or sixty-six days in the year for well over a quarter of a century have found verse and dialogue of mine in the Washington *Star*, under the caption "Shooting Stars." In addition, there has been enough news-paragraph comment in adjacent space to qualify me, I think, as a "colyumist" in amount of production as well as in the form.

It is many years since I have had a picture made, and the snapshot carries with it a sense of sorrowing surprise. A fattish myope scribbling in seclusion among swirls of dishevelment is not at all the personality which Youth set out with exuberant purpose to attain. The position of the left hand can be explained only on the theory that when engaged in news paragraphing it is necessary to use artificial pressure on what phrenologists designate "the bump of reverence," which in my case is abnormally developed.

Wit, at its best, consists in the terse intrusion into an atmosphere of serene mental habit of some uncompromising truth. The flash-light photo is no feeble jest.

IN TRYING to analyze the process of mind as well as the circumstances which lead to newspaper humor as an incessant employment, the journey back through Remembrance Lane brings me to a big yard around a not very big house, in what was then scarcely more than a village, Columbus, Ohio. For me it was a realm of fantastic things. Weeds were tended quite as solicitously as flowers. Beanstalks and pumpkin-vines were carefully cultivated, in the unfading hope that they would one day reveal a Jack the Giant-killer or a chariot for Cinderella. This little jungleland, containing everything from the gentlest of fairy queens to the fiercest of "lines and taggers," I peopled with characters and livened with events picked up through attentive listening to the conversation of my elders.

The "Humor Desk" of "The Evening Star," Washington, D. C.

SHOOTING STARS

BY PHILANDER JOHNSON

Faded Felicitations.

I gave three cheers when Cousin Bob secured a governmental job

A bookish and religiously inclined ancestry is evidenced by Christian names I discovered in a family Bible I saw for the first time not long ago: "Palemon," "Jason," "Sylvanus," "Basileal" (familiarized as "Uncle Baz,") "Jesse," "Shuah," and others of the kind. I regarded the name "Philander" as a sort of hereditary eccentricity. The old Bible revealed to me that my name is not really "Johnson." It is "Jansen." The paternal great-grandfather's name was "Diederich Jansen." I have my respectful suspicions that he was an honest Dutch peasant, who wore wooden shoes and used a tack-hammer instead of a button-hook.

There was always one thing that would interrupt my diamond-mining among the pebbles or my wild-animal hunt among the weeds—my mother's singing as she moved about the house, which to my short-sighted eyes seemed a castle off in the misty distance. No prima donna ever had so many sincere encores from so devoted an audience. My love of rhythm was strong, and the poems that floated through the newspapers were invariably read aloud to me in order that more important business might proceed. Sometimes the marriage licenses and the mortality lists had to be read, for at least a few lines, in order to prove that they were only optical illusions. A little later, dashes of clipped and pasted repartee that used to round out a local "colyum," which a rather indiscriminate compiler headed "Crimes and Casualties," attracted my inquisitive and admiring notice. For a long time "Casualties" stood as a synonym for "Jokes." The favorites among these bits of banter were from the Burlington *Hawkeye*—"Bob Burdette," people called their author. Bob Burdette! He was my wonder man; who, miles distant, farther even than Xenia or Dayton, could smile himself and have his smiling reflected on the faces of his fellow beings everywhere. Even now it seems mysterious as wireless itself.

THERE was not versification enough to meet my appetite for word rhythm, not even in the armfuls of exchanges which came into the house in the course of my father's business as police reporter, city editor, dramatic critic, book reviewer, editor in chief and, if need were, even foreman of the composing-room of the then leading newspaper of the town. So I tried a little on my own account. I recited the four lines to my mother, who looked pleased; to my father, who looked scared. I will as a matter of biological record confide them here, Waltmasonically:

What can the fairies be about, going in and coming out of a lily, tall and white, standing in the pale moonlight!

It was of course a jumble of remembered things, but I make bold to claim for it a trait in common with larger and far better verses. There never was any answer to it.

My admiration broadened. "Little Breeches" was a friend at first, but a taskmaster when I found myself required to recite, "I don't go much on religion," etc., regularly on Friday evenings at the First Congregational Church at the cornor of Russell and North High Streets.

Shortly after coming to Washington I revenged myself by writing a parody, "L. Breeches, Esq.," describing his search for the poet who had put him into fame and his disappointment at finding him, not in a simple cottage, but in a palace. The parody ended:

I'm going to change my manners and my habit of speech so blunt. It's time that this here Little Breeches had a crease ironed down the front.

William Elroy Curtis, whom I recall with George Alfred Townsend as one of the two readiest and best informed conversationalists I ever met, was struck by the rhymes and brought them to Hay's attention. There was in Mr. Hay's comment to me a tinge of apology for having written the original at all. It was an enormous popular hit, but he evidently felt that it was just a trifle out of character at that stage of his responsibilities.

I do not quite understand how I became for so long a fixture in Washington. I intended to remain on a personal errand only for a week or so. The fascination of the place, which so many feel, held me

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from day to day, then from year to year, until secure association came to mean more than chanceful opportunity. It impressed me as a queer turn of circumstance that Frank Hatton, proprietor of the Washington *Post*, saw some of my work and wondered whether I would not develop somewhat on the lines of my boyhood idol, Bob Burdette, who had been a protégé of Hatton's on the Burlington *Hawkeye*.

Like every man who rhymes and phrases, I early felt the wonderful influence of Eugene Field, whom I never met, but whose exquisite penmanship is somewhere among my letters. Every writing man who knew him worshiped Field, and to this day, like Whitcomb Riley, he is imitated by myself and others at moments when we think we are going at our best.

One of the men whose ways with words caught my eager attention was M. Quad, of the Detroit *Free Press*. I liked his pen name—it came direct from the print-shop. A print-shop was a place where I passed as much time as school hours would allow. The present type measurement by "points" has never become as familiarly clear to me as the old system of designation from Great Primer to Diamond. I often wondered why so many circus advertisements were printed in Great Primer and so many bibles in Diamond.

As it was quite by accident that I remained in Washington, it was quite by accident that I fell in with W. J. Lampton, a Cincinnati friend, who was convinced that Washington was an especially favorable field for political humor. He proved it by his "Jedge Waxem," to whom I think my own Senator Sorghum is in some degree indebted. A more free and easy spirit was then permissible. Daniel Lamont was Cleveland's private secretary, and Lampton printed a series of dialogues, each beginning, "Daniel, said the President," and proceeding into a conversation of burlesque statesmanship. Hilarious endorsement was given by innumerable exchanges. Imagine an audacious scrap of dialogue now, beginning with the sentence, "'*Joseph*,' said the President!"

When Lampton decided to go to New York, he told me in advance of his intentions, and coached me in the work with which he had given reputation to the caption, "Shooting Stars." It retains to-day the small black-letter head that the editor, Crosby S. Noyes, selected. I wanted to be a reporter, not a "colyumist." But when I tried to drop the persiflage I was not allowed to do so.

I WONDERED, as so many people must wonder, whether newspaper humor had a legitimate place in the world of thought. I recall a conversation with Chevalier de Kontski, who composed "The Awakening of the Lion," which young ladies at schools were accustomed to attack after they had learned "Monastery Bells" and "Silvery Waves." As we walked together one evening before his concert opened, he stopped and listened to a hand-organ.

"Do you condescend to enjoy those tunes?" I asked.

"Those tunes," he said, "are none the less beautiful because they are abundant and uncultivated. They are the wild-flowers of music."

The passing expression of rhyme or repartee might, I thought, have a place, rightful though obscure, in Nature's big economy.

Every man who rhymes likes to think of having his verse chanted into remembrance with the aid of music. Cy Warman won more renown from "Sweet Marie" than from other, better poems. Eugene Field, with all his tenderness and fancy, was most in evidence for a time through the jingling ditty about "The Peach of emerald hue which grew and grew," leading up to the chorus, "Listen to my tale of woe." It was more widely sung than his "Little Boy Blue." A song is an accident that may easily never happen to the most prolific poetaster. To F. L. Stanton it is a frequent experience. It has happened to me only twice, and each time under the most unpremeditated circumstances.

It was a pleasure I shall not easily forget to find a group of wounded boys at Walter Reed Hospital able to repeat every line of "Somewhere in France is the Lily," as one of their number led the chorus on a violin which had been his companion in the trenches. The verse was almost never written, almost never sung, almost never published. Yet it made one of the ballad favorites of the war.

AND one afternoon, desiring to round out the typographical picture, I wrote a little verse about "Old-fashioned flowers," holding myself to two four-line stanzas because I was tired. The New York *Sun* copied it with personal credit, which brought me in the course of time a letter from a total stranger to me, Mr. Clay Smith, notifying me that he had set it to music and had secured a publisher. It has been a source of various agreeable communications; but to this day I have never met Mr. Smith. That a verse so perfunctorily produced should prove itself worthy of more than a passing consideration shows how, even in the little game of rhymes, the element of chance may contradict our estimates and calculations.

The unreliability of self-estimation is frequently impressed. An unusual lengthy, laborious and, I thought, well-turned expression left me with a sense of satisfaction. Other material was appended merely for the sake of variety. The next day several people affably assured me that I had turned out something unusually bright, and I felt that a serious effort had been worth while. But it soon became clear that what had appealed to fancy was not what had pleased me with myself. It was only a little jingle:

Oh, what a blamed uncertain thing
This pesky weather is!
It blew and snew and then it thew
And now, by jing, it's friz!

There is interest in contributing something, however slight, to the talk of the time. It is an interest that impels prominent citizens to serve on committees whose purposes they do not closely follow and introduce orators they do not know. We all want to remind one another in some way that we have been on earth. I think that two widely circulated phrases were first used by me; both of them in conversation, not in print. I never saw either until after I had used them; one, the rather unfeeling invitation to end a hard-luck story: "*Cheer up! The worst is yet to come!*" and the other, the admonition, "*Don't throw a monkey-wrench into the machinery.*"

The most widely circulated and most inexcusable phrase contortion I ever executed was a fragment of a semi-impromptu diversion at a Washington dinner, where Secretary Daniels, among many other public men, was a guest. The Secretary had just issued an order for softs drinks only on ship board.

What's the difference between the Secretary of the Navy and Herod?
Herod crucified the Jews and Mr. Daniels juicified the crews.

I think it is the worst joke I ever made, but Secretary Daniels liked it and made me write it down for him.

The most enduring joke I ever wrote is still coming up occasionally after a life of decades in the vaudevilles:

"Erastus, are you the defendant in this case?"
"No, Jedge, I's got a lawyer hired to do de defendin'. I's de man dat stole de chickens."

Uncle Bill Bottletop, a rather recent recruit to my Colyum Squad, said: "*The man who called it 'near beer' was a bad judge of distance*," a remark lately quoted in a moment of intellectual relaxation from the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States; although, of course, that is no sign it is funny.

The most distinguished laughter in which I ever had a share occurred at a dinner at which Theodore Roosevelt responded to the toast, "The President of the United States." There was controversy about Dr. Rixey's appointment to command a hospital ship. I had written a brief travesty on the immortal "Pinafore" discussing the good ship "*Æsculapius*," on a sea of Epsom salt. I recall only the lines:

Kind Captain, I have got an inflammation.
Sing hey, the learned captain that you are!
Oh, please prescribe a course of navigation!
Sing hey, the jolly doctor and the tar.

It was regarded in rehearsal as a perilous impudence, but Roosevelt chuckled and applauded like a gallery god.

"Where," he inquired, "did you get those sailor clothes?"

It was a tough question, involving all kinds of punitive possibilities. "We borrowed them," came the confession, "from the sailors on your yacht, the *Mayflower*."

Roosevelt threw back his head and laughed honestly and long. Then he exclaimed: "The kid seethed in its mother's milk!"

As to something worth while that I may have turned out, I shall, without asking his permission, leave it to the judgment of Admiral Samuel MacGowan, who selected these lines to be distributed to those under his direction during the war:

EACH MAN'S ARMY

The Seconds that tick as the clock moves along
Are Privates who march with a spirit so strong.
The Minutes are Captains. The Hours of the day
Are Officers brave, who lead on to the fray.
So, remember, when tempted to loiter and dream,
You've an army at hand; your command is supreme;
And question yourself, as it goes on review—
Has it helped in the fight with the best it could do?

In the June number Frank L. Stanton of the Atlanta Constitution will appear at this Confessional.

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He found one to his liking; inspected it carefully; held it up to the light of the one gas-jet.

A Little of Both

By Barker Shelton

Here is a writer new to EVERYBODY'S, making his entrance with one of the best stories he ever wrote. It is the story of a woman who pitted her wits against a man's will to murder—vivid, tense to the last line. Mr. Shelton's next story—a delightfully whimsical love-story—is "The Subjunctive Mood."

AS BARTOL GRESHAM turned the corner, forsaking the brighter lights of the avenue for the splotchy gloom of the mean and dingy little street, he pulled the collar of his coat closer about his throat. He did this partly because the March downpour, cold rain intermixed with big, clinging flakes of snow, was changing from intermittent showers to a steady, businesslike storm; but more because the few lights along that narrow little street, shining sickly yellow through the sleet, struck colder to the marrow of his bones than even the gusty drenchings of the storm.

Numbers seemed to be a matter of purely personal inclination in that street. Some of the doorways had them and some had none. Bart Gresham counted doorways as he went along, verified his count when an occasional number presented itself, and began his counting again. He paused before what was apparently a small, narrow, down-at-the-heel sort of shop. Green shutters were hooked over its two windows; a thick, opaque curtain was drawn over the glass panel of the door. It had no number, no name of its proprietor anywhere visible, no hint as to the character of the wares it offered.

But this would be Asher Seigel's place without a doubt. The green shutters at the windows proclaimed this. So did the brass door-knob, a knob of curious design: the head of a lion in relief upon it, mouth open, tongue lolling, the green verdigris of years crusted thick upon it. To make the identity of the place yet more certain, number 126 was two doors above it; wherefore, by all the laws of the sequence of street numbers this must be 130.

The shivering man on the sidewalk—one of those old-young men, the spring of youth which should have still been his gone out of him, face lined deeply beyond his years—was alone in that street; no one else in sight anywhere under the feebly burning lights; just the rumble of traffic on the avenue and the more distant roar of an elevated train now and then for company.

He stretched out a hand to the knob and turned it to the right as far as it would go; slowly three times, then twice sharply, and waited and watched and listened. He fancied a faint light glowed at a crack in the left-hand shutter. He thought he heard a stumbling, creaking sound, as of some one descending narrow stairs, too steep and badly lighted.

On a rainy Sunday evening such as this, the shutters over his shop-windows, the opaque curtain covering the glass panel of the door, that ingenious electric device running from the quaintly fashioned door-knob to a small, not-too-loud bell upstairs, Asher Seigel might be reading the

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Talmud or the Koran, or even comparing certain books on the Apocrypha with passages in Daniel; for Asher Seigel, with all his other sins, was something of a scholar, and narrowed by no hampering bonds of either race or creed.

He might have been anywhere between fifty and seventy, thin to a skeleton-like boniness; narrow of shoulder, flat of chest; the upper part of his face with the bulging overhang of the forehead that of a thinker; the lower part of the face, angling sharply, wizened, sallow, that of a rat. An old frock-coat, smeared with the drippings of many a broiled bloater, and a round black cap of stiff silk were such inevitable accouterments of his type that somehow you could not seem to imagine him without them.

As a matter of fact, this particular evening he was deep in the Koran. Now and again the little not-too-loud bell above his head gave a sudden whir. He paid no attention to it whatever. The prank of some passing urchin or a roundsman trying his door, that was all. But when the bell sounded three long and two staccato burrings, Asher laid down the Koran. He turned down the mantel gas-lamp at his elbow. He went down a flight of narrow stairs, too steep and badly lighted. He crossed his littered, smelly shop. He set the chain in place at the front door, that no one might force entrance upon him, and opened the door a stingy crack.

He surveyed the old-young man waiting outside in the sleet, and the old-young man in turn surveyed Asher Seigel. They took each other's measure to the accompanying beat of sleet upon the shutters, and the whine of puffy gusts of wind around the angles and corners.

"A gentleman named Pike McCabe said I would find a party named Seigel at this address," said the man outside.

The chain clicked as it was dropped. The door swung open.

"Come in!" said Asher Seigel.

A match rasped and sputtered. One single gas-jet did what it could—poor, wan ghost in that dark vault of a place. Bart Gresham and Asher Seigel continued to size each other up in its faint aura. Each seemed quite satisfied with the other.

Asher Seigel rubbed his thin hands together; long, well-shaped hands; white hands, but the nails needed attention.

"Well, well, now! You came for something definite. Of course. What can I do for you?"

THE reports of Asher Seigel that had come to Gresham—that Asher Seigel heard, yet did not hear; that he saw, yet did not see; that anything you bought of him could never by any chance be traced back to Asher to drag him into court as a witness—all seemed quite correct to Gresham, looking at the thinker-rat rubbing his hands together under the wheezing gas-jet. Asher Seigel was safe enough. No doubt of it. You could say anything to him; he would hear it and yet he wouldn't hear it.

"I have come for a present for a lady," said Bart Gresham, with the sting of some grim, hidden meaning in the words.

The wizened little man, more like a rat than ever when he moved about, scurried over to a dirty glass show-case on one counter.

"Quite so! Quite so! A lady! A present for her! Something nice; something pretty!"

He took out a tray of rings, huddled together on worn black velvet, and another of little gold chains.

Bart Gresham started to laugh, but the sound of that laughter echoed in such hollow fashion through Asher Seigel's shop that he stopped short.

"You know damn well I don't want anything like this," he snapped. "We understand each other. We have understood each other from the first."

An asthmatic whistle or a faint chuckle—it might have been either—came out of the dried-up tubes in Asher Seigel's throat.

"Quite so! Quite so!" said he. "Gentlemen always understand each other. A pleasure to meet a gentleman who understands. How about these?"

HE SWUNG about. He pulled out a drawer. He set it on the counter. Gresham looked down upon the blued steel of twenty-odd automatic guns.

"That's better," he said, pawing them over.

He found one to his liking; inspected it carefully; held it up to the light of the one gas-jet. "How much?"

The old man behind the counter named the price. The younger man produced it and handed it over.

"Now some shells for this piece of artillery," he suggested.

Asher whisked open another drawer. "Wrap 'em up for you?" he chirped.

Gresham shook his head. He stuffed the gun into the inside pocket of his coat.

"Nothing else?" Asher asked, thinking of his light up-stairs and the Koran face-down beside it.

"Nothing. This is all. McCabe's regards to you."

"Mine to him, if you see him again," said Asher, with a quick lifting of his head and a sudden meaning and unpleasant gleam in his eyes.

"Sha'n't see him again," said Gresham, his lips tightening over his teeth. He added in a mumble: "Thank God!"

Asher Seigel stepped toward that one ghostly gas-jet, struggling against such fearful odds in the heavy darkness of the shop. Business being over and done with, it was plain Asher would not have it registering its feeble tally longer on the meter.

"I'll be getting back to my Koran now," he said.

"You read the Koran?" Gresham asked in blank surprise.

"Often. I was reading it to-night when you came."

"I've dipped into it myself a little, off and on. Some beautiful passages in it."

"Some extremely beautiful passages."

They began quoting such passages back and forth. Bart Gresham settled himself saggingly against a counter. Asher forgot the gas-jet eating its time into the meter. They passed on to the Talmud. Bart was not as familiar with that. But Asher could talk of it by the hour most engagingly, and quote it yet more engagingly and aptly. The sleet pounded away at the shutters. The gas-jet, burning unwarrantedly beyond the transaction of business, ate into profits. At last Bart, noting the time, started.

"It's getting late. The lady should have her present, I suppose."

Again that dry whistling in the tubes of Asher's throat.

"Of course. By all means. Time flies so when one meets a gentleman of understanding. I seldom meet a gentleman of understanding." He unlocked the shop door. "Good night!" he said. A gust of wind peppered him with a stinging sleet. "A nasty night."

"Very nasty. I think it will be worse before it's over. Good night!"

Gresham stepped onto the uneven sidewalk of that mean street again. No one was in sight. Just the rumble of the avenue, the roar of the elevated, distant enough to be a not unpleasant murmur. He had come alone and he was going forth alone. Everything was well. He lowered his head to the gusty flaws and pushed off.

But Bart Gresham did not know that some one had followed him thither, shadowed him in so painfully dodging a fashion—the way of the amateur in such things—that it was a wonder the shadower had not called attention to himself by the very overcautiousness of his caution. He had slipped out of a near-by doorway when Asher had let Gresham into the shop. He had tried to listen at the door with the opaque shade covering its glass panel. He had seen the light seeping through a crack up in the left-hand shutter. He had brought himself, with a great wabbliness of knees, to climb on the sill and glue his eye to that crack. He had witnessed the transfer of the gun from Asher Seigel's drawer to Bart Gresham's coat pocket.

Upon which he had waited no longer, but scurried away as fast as he could leg it, his knees wabblier than ever. A pasty-faced little man, not built for rough work, a soft little man, just now a much frightened little man. He had dodged into the first corner drug-store in his hasty retreat. The telephone-booth had swallowed him immediately.

EVENSONG was in progress in the Church of the Apostles. Lou St. John, opening wider a partly raised window at the rear of the Alhambra Apartments, realized this when the rumble of the organ drifted to her across the narrow alleyway between the rear of the apartments and the starboard side of the church. Also, through a Gothic window, lowered at its peaked top, she caught the shimmering glow of candles on the altar.

The immediate surroundings of the Church of the Apostles have changed sadly in the past decade. Where formerly it hobnobbed with the brownstone fronts of well-to-do families, it is now shut in and dwarfed by towering apartment-houses like the Alhambra—very small apartments, bath and kitchenette, no references required, inquire of the janitor on the premises.

It was the kitchenette window of her two-room apartment high up in the Alhambra cliff that Miss St. John had opened. She was making tea for a Sunday-evening caller. The kitchenette had grown very stuffy, as such kitchenettes will, while she waited for the kettle to boil on the gas-stove. Sleet came pelting in through the open window. A nasty night outside. Lou stuck out her head. A combination of rain and clammy snow assailed her. The wind tore loose and set flapping against her cheeks strands of hair

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that were brown when the shadows were upon it and red in a full light.

The organ in the Church of the Apostles sank into diminuendo. The kettle began to boil.

Lou St. John finished making the tea and carried it into the room beyond.

Her caller was huddled in a rocking-chair close to a drawing-board on its metal standard. There was a half-finished drawing on the board—of a winsome young lady, rather shamelessly décolleté, frothing her hair whitely with Somebody-or-Other's shampoo-powder.

The woman in the rocking-chair was daintily clothed and sadly shaken up. Tear-stains marked her cheeks. Her hat was the latest thing a costly hat should be. Her long coat was expensive, the pretty gown beneath it more so; the buckle of either trim pump represented a sum that would have been the foundation of a fortune in careful hands.

SHE was strangely like Lou, yet wholly unlike her. Her hair was the same fluffy hair, brown in shadow, red in stronger light; the eyes were the same; so was the well-shaped little mouth; likewise the straight nose and the arch of the brows. But her skin was softer and whiter than Lou's; the lines of her face less pronounced. Milly St. John's beauty had hardened in Lou St. John's face into strength, determination, dependableness, an eminent ability to take care of herself under any circumstances. Yet the world would have called Milly St. John a raving little beauty and passed up Lou. For the world does love its superficial, first-sight judgments.

Lou thrust the cup of tea into Milly's shaking hands. She was two years younger than her sister and looked a good five years older.

"Here's some tea, Milly," she said. "Drink it! You'll feel better."

Milly took the tea. The cup rattled a tattoo against the saucer in her shaking hand. Lou drew up a chair for herself.

"Now, then, let's get down to cases. You're sure Bart Gresham is out?"

"This afternoon. Came down on the train. Ranny was watching at the station. He's following him now to see what he does."

"Ranny!" Lou sniffed. "He'll die of heart-failure if Bart turns and looks at him."

"He was the only one I could think of. I was so scared when I heard it was to-day. I thought it wouldn't be for three months."

"I don't believe he meant what he said, anyway," Lou declared.

"Yes, he did. You don't know him."

"Well, he's had quite a time to think it over. He's probably changed his mind."

"Not him. Lou, I'm afraid. I can't die. I'm not ready to die."

"Probably not," said Lou grimly. "None of us ever are. You're not dead yet. And I don't believe you will be, by his hands."

"He'll do what he said he would. I'm afraid!"

Lou stirred her tea thoughtfully. She said nothing.

"I suppose in a way I deserve it, too."

"You didn't stick very well in the pinch, Milly. You let him spend his money; you helped him spend it. You didn't know he was playing a crooked game after his money was gone, but it was for you; and when the crash came you turned your back on him and drew away your skirts from him. Well, that's done and can't be undone now. You've got to think what you'll do at present."

"Lou, what shall I do? What shall I? Help me!"

"Well, if you're so almighty shaky about things, why don't you beat it out of here and lay low for a while?"

"He'd find me wherever I went. You couldn't hide yourself anywhere from a man like him."

"Lou, save me! I'm afraid! I'm afraid!"

"Have him restrained then, by law. He's made the threat."

"Lot of good that would do," Milly said. "Ranny's looked all that up. Have him bound over to keep the peace, and left perfectly free to do whatever he sees fit, if he's willing to take the consequences! He would be."

"Stuff! It was a wild threat. He won't try anything of the sort, believe me."

Milly seemed trying to force herself to accept this view-point of her sister's. She looked up with a gleam of hope in the tear-filled eyes. "You really think that, Lou?"

"Sure of it."

The telephone-bell tinkled its summons. Lou answered.

"Some one wants you, Milly. Sounds like Ranny's voice."

Milly, that gleam of hope still in her eyes, crossed the room to the telephone on the wall. Lou's ears were alert for Milly's side of the conversation at the phone.

"Yes," said Milly's voice. "Yes. . . . Yes. . . . Yes. . . ."

"Oh! . . . Oh! . . . Oh, Ranny!"

Milly's tone had changed. It was choking, filled with despair. "My God, Ranny! What'll I do? Where are you? Where?"

Milly, stumbling blindly away from the phone, collided with the drawing-board. It upset with a crash. White-lipped, she steadied herself against the wall.

"God! He means business all right, Lou. He's just bought a gun. Ranny was peeking into the place where he bought it and saw him do it."

Lou stiffened.

"Lou, help me! Lou, save me! Somehow save me!"

The last responses before the prayers came drifting across the narrow alley from the Church of the Apostles. A voice intoned:

"O God, make clean our hearts within-n-n-n us!"

More loudly the chanting of the choir came through the stormy darkness without:

"And take not Thy Ho-ly Spirit from-m-m-m us."

Milly lurched forward into the kitchenette at Lou's feet. She caught her sister's knees.

"Lou, save me! For the love of God! I'm afraid! Afraid!"

Lou put her hand beneath the chin of the groveling girl, lifting her twisted face. She stroked with the other hand the fluffy brown-red hair so like her own.

"All right, Milly! All right! I will!" she said very gently.

A TAXI rattled down the avenue. It drew up to the curb at the corner of the mean little street into which Bart Gresham had turned his steps a half-hour earlier. Lou St. John got out. She paid the chauffeur. The taxi rattled off again through the wind-driven sleet.

Lou made her way down the uneven sidewalk, with the pools of slushy water in its many hollows lying in wait for careless feet. She kept in the shadows close to the rickety buildings. She peered sharply, anxiously into every gloomy, spooky doorway she passed.

The twentieth doorway yielded up the quarry she sought. Some one moved in the deep shadows at the back of it. A man stepped forward, a little pasty-faced, frightened man, a soft, pleasure-loving little man in immaculate raiment.

"Hello, Ranny!" said Lou St. John under her breath.

He drew her into the darkness of that cabbage-smelling doorway. "This is a bad business, Lou; a bad business," he said. Then he added by way of explaining the chattering of his teeth, "Fearfully cold, isn't it?"

"Where is he?" Lou demanded. "Which way did he go?"

"He hasn't gone anywhere yet," said the smooth little man beside her. "He's still over there."

Lou followed the direction of his pointing finger. A feeble ray of light showed itself through the crack in the window-shutter of a down-at-the-heel little shop across the street.

"That's where he bought the gun?"

"Uh-huh! Saw him stuff it into his pocket. Went to the corner and phoned.

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Then I came back and took a peek through that crack. Had to climb up on the sill almighty cautious to do it. He was still there talking to the old bird that owns the place. I've been watching for him to come out ever since."

"You've done very well, Ranny," Lou complimented him with a bite of irony in the words.

"Haven't I, though? We can't let him do what he's contemplating. We've got to head him off somehow. He mustn't hurt Milly."

"No. Surely he mustn't. Besides, Milly's afraid to die."

"A bad business all round. How shall we stop him?"

"Leave it to me. I've got a plan."

"Tell me about it. How can I help?"

But Lou St. John did not divulge her plan to him, whatever it was. She did, however, tell him how he could help. She told him shortly, crisply: "Ranny, you beat it out of here."

"Leave you here all alone?" he chirped, torn between doubt at the thought of such a course and relief at the bare suggestion of it.

"*I'm* not afraid," she said, with perhaps too strong an emphasis on the initial word.

"I don't know about doing anything like that," he demurred. It was purely perfunctory demurring.

"You run along. Now. Right away. You'd simply queer everything by sticking around here. Don't want you. This is my job, single-handed. You wouldn't fit. So you toddle up to the flat and cheer up Milly. She's there, and she needs cheering up. Sing to her. You sing so very well, Ranny," she ended, the same sting of irony creeping into her words again.

The little man did some further arguing on the point, wholly perfunctory again, and finally took his departure along the wabbly sidewalk toward the avenue, shaping a general course for the Alhambra Apartments. He showed ghostlike for a moment beneath one of those sickly street lights, was swallowed by darkness immediately, and, a wraith in the night, appeared beneath the next one. Lou smiled, her lips curling as she did so—a pitying, patient, half-disgusted, half-tolerant smile.

Presently a bolt rasped in that shop across the street. The door swung open. An old-young man came out. Bart Gresham, Lou knew, although she had never before seen him. Asher Seigel was outlined dimly in the feeble glow of the doorway.

THEY said their "good nights" to each other. She heard Asher say it was a nasty night, and Bart Gresham agree with him that it was a very nasty night indeed.

Then the door of Asher Seigel's shop closed. The bolt rasped once more as he shot it home, and chains rattled as he set them in place. Bart Gresham trudged down the street, head lowered to the flailing slant of sleet.

The girl sped out of her doorway, crossed the street, slopping through slushy puddles, and hurried after him. She caught up with him some distance down the apology for a sidewalk. He heard her coming and half turned. He seemed electrified when she spoke his name.

"Good evening, Mr. Gresham!" she said, a trifle breathlessly.

He faced her, scowling. This street he traversed, this woman who accosted him upon it, seemed to relieve him of the necessity of any overniceties of speech.

"Who the devil are you?" he asked.

"I am a woman who knows you, but whom you do not know," said she. "I used to read about you in the papers, envy you, delight in your quaint if somewhat mad caprices. You seemed to me human, alive, the sort of man to appeal to a woman's heart."

"Perhaps I was," he admitted gruffly. "But not now."

"I was not your kind at all, and yet because you and your career here, unburdening yourself of too much money, appealed to me, I worshiped you afar off. Afterward, when the crash came, I was sorry for you. I am sorrier for you to-night than ever. That's why I am here."

HE LOOKED at her with kindling suspicion. "You seem to know a great deal about me. How much do you know?"

"Everything."

"Lord, I should hope not. I should hope no living soul knew that much!"

"Well, almost everything, then," she amended her statement.

He seemed better satisfied with that. But the suspicion in him mounted. "You've been following me," he accused her.

"Yes," she admitted.

"How far?"

"A long way."

"From the time I landed here in the station to-night, no doubt."

"Possibly."

"How did you know I'd be there at the station to-night? How did you know I'd be back here at all to-night?"

She did some quick thinking. "There are ways of finding out such things if one is curious about them."

He rubbed a hand across his forehead. "They told me up there that even the walls talked. Looks as if they were right."

At all costs she must kill that overweening suspicion in his eyes. She went headlong into this first important task facing her.

"You amused the world for a day, then it forgot you, turned its back on you, didn't it? Well, I didn't. When you dropped out of sight, when the scandal of your last and wildest piece of folly was dying out, when everybody else forgot, I remembered. Because, although I had never spoken to you, never even seen you, I had worshiped you from afar off, as I have already told you. And I was sorry for you. Bitterly sorry. So I found out everything I could about you. As I have already said, and as you yourself know well enough, there are ways of finding out such things if one is curious."

"Those walls do talk," he interrupted her, muttering as if to himself alone.

"So I learned it was to-night you would be coming back. Alone, friendless. You who have had so much. I wanted you to have at least one friend to help you; to trust, to believe in. So I have come to you; followed you, if you like."

Bart Gresham looked at her narrowly in the faint light of a near-by street-lamp. A great desire struggled in his eyes with a great unbelief.

"What are you driving at?" he snapped at last. "What's your real game? These things you're prattling about, they simply don't exist; they are not done."

"I am doing them, or trying to do them," she maintained.

"Some one who thought my fool career with the bright lights was picturesque, liked me for that; wants to be a friend to me now! God! Is there such folly loose in the world? Folly worse than mine? What's your idea about helping me, anyway? You may be a little fool, but I'll listen to you."

She bit her lips to keep back a sharp answer that rose to them. "I want to help you; to be your friend. Women have made you lose faith in women. I want a woman to bring you back that faith, and I ask nothing better than to be that woman."

He took a step toward her, bending slightly, the better to see her face. "Who are you?" he asked her again.

"That doesn't matter. To you I shall have to be just Girl. Who or what I am you must never know, and you must never try to find out. Every instinct of decency will tell you that."

He stared at her, his face softening. "But you know my name and all about me. You have an unfair advantage."

"To me from now on you will be just Boy."

"A friend," he muttered. "Like you! I believe you could bring me back faith in anything!"

She flushed at the sincerity of the words. "Would you like to try it and see?"

"God knows I would!"

"Then do so. Boy, they haven't been at all good to you; they haven't fed you well. You're thin. You look hungry. Let's begin, as so many worth-while upward climbs begin, with a good feed. There's a place near here, not so much for outward signs and appearances, but it does have the inward grace of good food and splendid coffee. It's warm there too, and pretty quiet of a Sunday night. Let's start right by going there at once."

He hesitated. "Sorry! Nothing doing. To be perfectly frank with you, Girl, I haven't the price."

"I have!"

"I'm not in the habit of letting a woman pay my bills. I'm not that far down."

SHE whirled upon him so sharply he involuntarily shrank away. "Is this the way to begin friendship and trust?"

"No, it isn't," he took back-water. "Lead me to this place you mention. I am plain, darned, all-fired hungry."

She piloted him back, past Asher Seigel's shop again, to the avenue, then northward.

Once he stopped stock still in the cold smother of the storm to look at her. "What are you, angel or devil?" he asked.

"A little of both, I presume. I am a woman."

The place to which she took him was all she had claimed for it and more. its outward appearance not as bad as he had expected. The food was better than she had given him to understand, so was the coffee. He felt much better when they came out into the storm again. They had talked; even laughed. He had kept his eyes upon her every moment. He could not seem to decide certain things in his mind.

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She wasn't pretty, yet she was extremely pretty at moments. Now he was sure he had never laid eyes on her before; now he was equally certain he had seen her often; had known her all his life.

They went westward; into the better streets. She stopped at the portals of a huge hotel. Some bills found their way into his hand.

"Boy," she said, "sleep well to-night. In here."

"No," he said, trying to force the money back into her hand.

She shook her head severely.

"Friendship, trust! Remember! You must have the very best to-night, at least, both to make you forget and to make you remember. You must start right. It is necessary. Besides," the inspiration of the old, threadbare excuse in such circumstances came to her, "it is only a loan. You can pay it back when you are on your feet again."

"I shall see you again?" he asked.

"You don't think I could bring back faith to you in one little evening, do you?"

"You've gone a long way toward it."

"Of course you'll see me again."

"When? Where?" he asked eagerly.

"To-morow night. An hour earlier than this. At the same place where we had supper together to-night."

Quite suddenly, as if it were something beyond either his volition or his control, he caught her to him—there in the glare of lights, kissed her; loosed her.

He stepped back. He seemed wholly ashamed of himself; wholly contrite the next moment. "Lord, what am I doing? This is pretty low-down of me after what you've done."

"Perhaps it's all right," she said doubtfully, a most becoming red mounting her neck and cheeks.

"Women have made you lose your faith in women. I want to bring you back that faith."

"WILL you want to see me again—after that?"

"Yes."

"It won't happen again. Forgive me, if you can. Good night!"

He turned toward the entrance of the hotel, swung about sharply and came back to her.

"I asked you if you were angel or devil, and you said you were a little of both. I'll make any one that ever says that of you eat it for the worst lie ever told. You are angel—all angel—all angel! Good night!"

The Alhambra's automatic elevator disgorged a drooping Lou St. John at one of the upper floors. She opened wearily the door of her own two-room suite. The place reeked of Ranny's cigarets. One was burning on the edge of the piano as he sang to Milly, huddled in a big chair.

She jumped up as Lou came in. "What have you done?" she demanded.

"You're safe," said Lou.

"What have you done? Tell me!"

"You're safe. That's enough. You will be safe; don't worry. I'm tired. You and Ranny run along now. I've got to finish some work."

"Lou! You old darling! You old brick! Lou, why wasn't I like you—so good, so brainy——"

Lou wriggled out of her sister's too emotional embraces.

"Can I go about just as I please, Lou?"

"I'd stick fairly close to the house for a couple of weeks or so. After that you can run about where you like. I'll promise you. Run along, you two, and let me get to work. Good night, Milly! Good night, Ranny!"

But even after the elevator had creaked downward with her sister and Ranny, the lady shampooing her hair with Somebody-or-Other's shampoo-powder did not get the attention from Lou her half-finished state and a contract from an advertising concern called for.

Lou threw herself face-down on a couch and wept a little, and pulled herself up short and stopped it, and finally turned over and lay staring with too-wide and too-fixed eyes at a zigzag crack in the ceiling. That swift kiss of Bart Gresham's was stinging her cheek and soothing it; making her desperately miserable and unbelievably happy.

At the hour and the place appointed, Bart Gresham was waiting for her next evening outside the door. It was plain he had no intention of being behind time and thereby risking missing her. They went in. They found a table in a far corner, a quiet table, as secluded as the place would offer.

"All last night and all to-day," he said as soon as they were seated, "I have been trying to size this thing up."

He looked troubled, like a man who doubted and yet was ashamed of himself for such doubts.

"Is there any need to size anything up?" Lou asked him.

"The whole affair is so strange, so queer. Your just reading about me when my wild spending and my fool escapades made good stories, and being sufficiently interested in me just from that to want to help me. I keep telling myself over and over such things don't happen; can't happen."

"You don't quite believe all I have told you, then?"

He did not answer at once.

"Do you want to believe it?" she asked softly.

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"You bet I do!"

The way he looked at her just then gave ample confirmation to this statement.

"Then why not just believe it all, and let it go at that?"

"That's exactly what I am going to do. I made up my mind to that to-day when I was thinking it all over, going around in circles and getting nowhere. The sort of people whom I have had for associates the past eight years make one suspicious. I can't help it."

"I don't blame you at all, but just do believe it all, won't you?"

"Let me offer you proof that I'm going to. I got a job to-day, first thing this morning. It isn't much. Down at the docks; trundling a loaded truck up a gang-plank and the empty truck down again. But at least it is honest work. And there aren't any delusions about me among the bunch that hired me. I gave 'em the whole thing straight. They said it didn't make any difference to them so long as I could play motor to the truck."

"That's splendid! It's a start. Work, too, is the best little elixir of forgetfulness in the world."

"They tell me there are good chances for the right men even in a job like mine."

"You are one of those 'right men.' "

"Don't be too sure of me."

"Somehow I'm perfectly sure of you."

"That'll help a whole lot," he said simply.

She met him every night after that at the same place, the same hour. After the evening meal together they strolled aimlessly about; sometimes in noisy streets; sometimes in quiet ones; or sometimes to a bench in the park or a similar bench over by the river. One evening they found themselves where the night lights are the brightest in the world and the night life the most strenuous. He looked up at the man-made glare with a queer, twisted smile.

"They used to call me the Candy Kid," he told her. "That was the label they put on me."

"Yes, I know."

Her fingers brushed his arm ever so lightly. "How you must have suffered," she said.

"I have paid, I think, for all my crazy-headedness," he replied. "I didn't intend to pay the whole bill alone. But that's the best way, I imagine. You've made me see, without ever meaning to do it, that's the best way."

He was trying to look at her as he spoke, but her head was turned away from him.

THE night of his first step up at the docks they had a little celebration at a rather better place than the one they had been frequenting. He was quite boyishly enthusiastic about his rise.

"Old Man Monahan, the boss down there, is sure a white man," he told Lou. "Talked to me to-day like a Dutch uncle. Said I had the makings in me."

"You have."

"I'm going to show 'em."

"Do it!"

"With your help."

"You've always got that."

"They tell me when Old Man Monahan singles you out for advice it means something. Shows he's got his eye on you."

He bent his head for a time, thinking deeply. "But I couldn't have done any of this except for you; that first night, in the sleet, when you came up to me——"

"Oh, yes, you would have done this just the same."

He started. His face paled at some unpleasant memory. "Never!" he said flatly.

Outside, she walked a little closer to him than usual. She said at last:

"Boy, I live in a little two-room apartment, two fair-sized closets for rooms; but there's a kitchenette with a bully gas-stove in it that will do all kinds of things for you with a little coaxing. And I'm some little cook. What I'm driving at is this: I'd just like to cook you a real homey sort of meal on that little old gas-range, say about next Sunday afternoon if you'd like it."

"Say, speaking of heaven——"

"But you'd have to promise not to try to find out anything about me. You wouldn't pump the janitor or any of the other tenants about me if I let you come, would you?"

"Do I look as if I were wholly crazy?"

"Of course, after what's happened, I couldn't let you know who I am nor what I am. Not yet."

"I hardly think any trust of yours in me will be misplaced now."

"Suite 67. Alhambra Apartments," she told him promptly.

"Count on me."

"Say about four, Sunday afternoon."

Sunday afternoon promptly at four he rang the bell of Suite 67 at the Alhambra Apartments. There was no name above that bell; if there had been one, it had been removed from the little brass card-slot.

"Hello!" he announced himself. "This is Boy!"

"Hello, Boy! Come right up."

THERE were no drawings of shampooing young ladies about the place that day. The drawing-board, everything that might give any clue to the girl's identity, was carefully under cover. It was just the usual little apartment of its kind, only somehow much cozier, much more homey, than such places usually are. The gas-stove had done, and continued to do, its best. It was a wonderful, cheerful little dinner she had engineered for him.

Afterward she held a match to his cigaret by the rear window. It grew dusk. Lights began to shine. The organ rumbled in the Church of the Apostles across the alleyway. He caught the shimmer of candles on the altar through a Gothic window, lowered at its peaked top.

He turned suddenly to the girl. "Girl," he said, "I've got an awfully queer longing. Don't laugh at me, will you? I've never been strong for anything of the kind, but to-night I'd like to go to church."

She nodded understandingly.

"With you!"

"I'm with you, Boy. Just a minute till I get on a hat."

The organist of the Church of the Apostles is world famous. Its choir is held up as a pattern to other such choirs throughout the country. The altar and its reredos are very old and very beautiful; the wonderful fretwork of both comes out best in the light of hundreds of candles.

What with the music, the lights, the girl beside him, who was not at all pretty, yet who was so wonderfully beautiful at odd moments, the peace of God which passeth all understanding came to Bart Gresham.

After service he stood with her in the rococo vestibule of the Alhambra.

"Girl," he said, "from that first night I met you I have not been wholly sure of myself until this minute. I have been packing something all the time that I somehow knew I should never use, yet kept telling myself I should use when this dream was over. Girl, it isn't a dream. It's real. I shall never wake up. So please take this, and keep it from me, or give it away or throw it away."

The vestibule door creaked shut behind him. Lou St. John's eyes were fixed on the blue-steel barrel of the automatic gun he had thrust into her hands.

Up-stairs in the two rooms of Suite 67, the little spread table in the center of the floor as she had left it, she looked at the gun again, by the reflected light coming in through the windows; her own lights untouched.

At last she arose, stepped to the telephone, called for a number.

"Hello, Milly," she said at length. "Go where you like now. No need at all of laying low any longer. . . . Yes . . . . Yes, perfectly safe. . . . What? . . . No, perfectly well. . . . No, I haven't any cold. . . . Crying? Me! Did you ever see me cry? What have I got to cry about? Everything's worked out beautifully and you needn't worry a particle from now on, no matter where you are or where you go. . . . Yes. . . . Good night!"

OLD Man Monahan knew a good thing when he saw it. That was one of the reasons why he drew the salary that he did. And Old Man Monahan, being wise in his day and generation, saw to it that Bart Gresham had his chance. It was a good chance. Boss of the stevedores on three big docks; the authority to hire and fire as he saw fit; a little office of his own, a very comfortable salary with it.

One Saturday night it was, that Monahan put Bart Gresham in charge of the gangs of stevedores. Sunday afternoon, earlier than he usually went there, Bart was hiking it for Suite 67 at the Alhambra, fairly bubbling over with the good news. Also there was a folded clipping from Saturday morning's paper in Bart's coat pocket. Things were breaking right and left for him, breaking big, he felt.

He had been to the Alhambra Apartments every Sunday afternoon since the Sunday of that first delectable home dinner on the gas-range of the Girl's kitchenette. The gas-stove had continued to do its best. She had proved thoroughly her own words concerning herself—that she was some little cook. Those were wonderful Sunday afternoons. After dinner Bart and the girl would slip over to evening service at the Church of the Apostles; or they would stand at a window watching the twilight fade and lights spring up; or they would walk through quiet, Sunday-hushed streets, or they would just talk in the little circle of light the two candles on the table made in the deepening dusk.

He announced himself as usual, and, impatient, bounded up the stairs because some one was using the elevator at the moment. He rattled off the news of his chance and his new position at the docks without a pause for breath. She listened, smiling at him. She put the dinner on the

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"Girl," he said, "I've got an awfully queer longing. Don't laugh at me, will you? I've never been strong for anything of the kind, but to-night I'd like to go to church."

little table. She lighted the two candles. They sat down.

"Boy," she said, suddenly serious, "we must make the most of this. This will be our last dinner together."

"What?" he almost shouted, dumfounded.

"We won't see each other after to-day. You won't need me. You've found yourself."

"What does all this mean?"

"Boy, I'm going away. You mustn't try to find me. You mustn't try to see me again. I came to you to help you. If I've done that, I'm happy and content. But I came to you. I can't forget that. Just to help you, that was all. Else I couldn't have come to you like that. I must remember that. Now you've found yourself, now that you're on your feet, I must go. You can see how it is, can't you?"

"No, I can't see how it is. You can't do anything like this. I won't have it——"

"I must, Boy," she said very gently.

A sudden bitter thought assailed him. He grew pale. "I forget," he said. "In making me forget you have made me forget too completely. Of course, I am still the jailbird."

"Boy, Boy, hush! It isn't that! You know it isn't that! You know it isn't that!" she said.

"Have you any idea what you have really done for me?" he said. "Because of a woman, her whims, her demands, I spent eight years at that accursed place up the river. I came out with but one thought in my twisted, bewildered head. That woman must pay, too. She had fooled me, played me, turned her back on me in the pinch. I wasn't going to bear everything alone. The thought of it was with me day and night. Even after I met you; even after you let me come here. It was always coming back to me; urging me to make her pay, too. I have fought that thing within the past ten days."

He paused, took a long breath, ran nervous fingers through his hair, then reached into his pocket and drew out a folded clipping.

"I think I should have had the strength to fight it out; I'm not wholly sure. But with the faith you brought me, I think I could have done it. But there's no question about the future now. That woman is dead. Killed in an auto smash on the Winchester Turnpike day before yesterday."

The girl across the table leaned slightly toward him, or perhaps better swayed slightly toward him. "I have just come from that woman's funeral," she said.

The full import of her words did not strike him at once. He stared at her with just the slightest narrowing of his eyes. Lou St. John pushed back her chair.

"My name," she said, too quietly, too calmly, "is Lou St. John. What does that tell you? Look at me!"

Bart Gresham got up. A plate slid off the table and crashed in pieces on the floor. "Lord God!" he muttered.

Lou, too, got up. She did not speak. She stood there very white and very erect. Gresham's shoulders sagged forward.

"Then it was just to save her. All this——"

"She was afraid to die."

"Lord God!"

"You have been cheated. It had to be. She was so afraid to die; so little; so pretty; so weak!"

He was clutching his chair-back to hold himself up. "You devil! You devil!" he said.

She did not change expression. "Cheated. But I will pay! Let me pay!"

She went into the next room. She came back with the automatic gun he had given her so abruptly that other Sunday night in the vestibule. "Use this on me! Now that it is all over; let me pay!"

She pushed the gun across the little table.

The rumble of the organ, bursting into the prelude of the evensong, came from the Church of the Apostles. Lou St. John waited, there across the table from him, white but unafraid. Bart Gresham caught up the gun.

"You might have begun it for her, but you didn't keep on with it for her," he said hoarsely. "No woman alive could have acted it that well. It was for me, after the very first of it. For me, I say."

He hurled the gun through the nearest window, which was shut, so there was a great tinkling of shattered glass. He pushed the table aside, upsetting it. He caught her in his arms.

"Now kiss me, Lou St. John!" he said, his voice shaking.

Her lips turned eagerly to his.

ONE of the seven complete short stories in the June issue of EVERYBODY'S is C. Rowland Wood's "Jimmy Pulls a Miracle," the story of a spectacular moving picture feature that fails to "go over" until a young Broadway press agent conceives a brilliant plan for arousing public interest. An attractive stenographer, a jealous cabaret singer, and an impressionable ex-soldier out of work all have a hand in an incidental romance that brings about surprising developments.

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The Deputy

By A. Neil Lyons

Author of "A London Lot," "Cottage Pie," etc.

MY PRETTY cousin had been entertaining me to what she called a "spin" in her brother's motor-car. My pretty cousin has only just learned how to drive her brother's motor-car, and she drives it with more courage than art.

My pretty cousin's brother has gone to be an army doctor at Aldershot, and my pretty cousin remains in charge of his house and of the new car and old "locum" which he has left behind him.

I am glad to say that we completed the spin without bloodshed, though my head did a little spinning on its own account as we mounted the doorstep of my pretty cousin's brother's pretty house. It is a suburban house.

A maid opened the door to us, and, after spinning round and round (as it seemed to me), addressed my pretty cousin, who also was spinning round and round. The maid said something about a drawing-room and a soldier, and then my pretty cousin, still spinning, took my arm; then we revolved in unison.

Very soon I found that I was sitting on a revolving chair in a revolving drawing-room looking helplessly at a large, revolving soldier, who carried a bandaged arm in a revolving sling. He had a very large mouth and very white teeth, with which he performed a revolving grin. I then closed my eyes. When I opened them, the room had left off revolving, so also had my pretty cousin, and so also had the soldier. But the soldier still grinned. His grin was wide, enthusiastic and respectful. He spoke to my pretty cousin, and his voice was enthusiastic and respectful, too. He said:

"Miss Pike, I believe? Right! Bert Wyatt's bit o' stuff, I believe? Right!

"Well, miss," continued the soldier, "I'm glad to meet ya. Bert Wyatt is my chum." The soldier extended his effective arm—the left one. My pretty cousin extended an arm also, and they shook hands with mutual warmth.

"I RECKON as Bert Wyatt," the soldier then added gravely, "is about the best fellar we got out there. 'Tenerate, I won't 'ear no different, not from nobody. 'E's my pal, is Bert Wyatt. 'E's the most splendid fellar we got!"

I was able to meet the soldier's eye and to associate myself warmly with these sentiments. Bertram Wyatt is a splendid fellow, although he did fail to pass into the Indian Civil Service. But his pull to leg is worth watching, and he can do a perfect young man, and there is nothing at all the matter with him, except his belief that he can play bridge and that he is good enough for my pretty cousin.

The soldier resumed his conversation with Miss Pike. "My name," he said, "is Jupp. Private Jupp. I dessay you've 'eard Bert speak of me."

"Of course," replied my pretty cousin. "You are Bill Jupp."

"That's me," assented the soldier. "Well now, miss, I've come 'ere out of friendship for Bert like, to return a bit of kindness what he done me Christmas time, when *'is* arm was tied up dolly-wise, the same as mine is now. I dessay you'll remember the time, for 'e came back 'ome on sick leave, and I dessay as you seen him then. Just once or twice like. Eh? Ha, ha!"

MY PRETTY cousin, blushing rather evidently, confessed to having not wholly forgotten the circumstance of Mr. Wyatt's last stay in London.

"Good," said the soldier. "Well, miss, old Bert 'e done me a very good turn the last time 'e was 'ome. I—er—I got a friend as lives in Plumstead. A young lady. She—er—well, miss, not to make a song about, she's *my* bit o' stuff. See? Miss Walker by name. I dessay you've 'eard Bert talk of 'er. No? That's strange!

"I call it strange, miss," continued Mr. Jupp, "because Bert 'e seemed to think a lot of Miss Walker the time 'e came back to the trenches, after his bit of sick leave. 'E talked about 'er a lot to me, 'e did."

"*Oh*," said Miss Pike.

"Yes, miss, 'e talked about 'er zither-playing an' that——"

"Oh," repeated Miss Pike.

"Yes," continued Mr. Jupp. "'Er and some of 'er young lady friends, they got up a bit of a party be'ind 'er uncle's little shop in Plumstead—dried 'addicks an' that, ya know—and Bert 'e talked a lot about that party. 'E told me 'e could write a book about that party. Ya see, miss, before ever he got his push in the arm and before ever I got ditto, Bert an' me we made a bargain. I'd showed 'im Miss Walker's picture, ya see, and he showed me yourn. And one day, when we was chumming up together like in our dugout, I says to him: 'I'll tell you what, mate,' I says. 'If you gets one before me,' I says, 'you go and see my girl,' I says, 'an' take 'er to the pictures.' 'That's a bargain!' sayd Bert. 'Yes,' I says, 'it's a bargain, Bert, and whenever I gits 'ome I'll run your bit around likewise!' 'Three cheers!' says Bert.

"Well, miss," continued Private Jupp, "as things fell out it was Bert's turn for to go 'ome first. As 'e said, so 'e done. 'E treated my girl proper. 'E took 'er to the pictures. 'E took 'er to the play. 'E bought her a pound o' toffee, a new zither and a gold watch, and 'e paid a fellar to take her photograph for to bring back to me in Belgium.

"Well, miss, poor old Bert 'e's in the trenches now, well and 'earty, worse luck, and it's my turn for a rest at 'ome. 'E kep' 'is word to me, and I'll keep my word to 'im. As 'e treated my bit, so I'll treat 'is. And," the soldier hesitated, and coughed, the cough of modesty, "and, well, miss, *here I am*."

My pretty cousin looked extremely pleased. "I suppose," she said to me, "that you can amuse yourself here for an hour or two while Bill and I go round the town a bit?"

I supposed that I could.

"That's all right, then," said my pretty cousin. "Now please find Bill a glass of whatever it is that he oughtn't to have, while I run up and stick on a better hat."

My pretty cousin came down again soon, having put on a better than better hat and a dress to match.

"What, oh!" cried Private Jupp, by way of intimating that he had noticed and approved this change of costume.

"'Ow do we go to find a taxi-cab?" he then inquired, adding, with a profound wink, "I can see you ain't the tram sort."

"Never mind about that," replied Miss Pike. "There's a little car outside. We can go for our joy-ride in that."

"What, oh!" exclaimed Bill.

IT WAS dusk and half-past dinner-time before they returned. They had lunched and they had tea'd. They had been to the play, they had been to the pictures. Bill had bought her the toffee, the zither, and a tortoise in a jar. He carried these offerings up the steps and deposited them about my feet. He then took off his cap and uttered his adieus. He said:

"Then all bein' well, miss, I'll see you Thursday. I must git off to Plumstead now. The other one's waiting for me there. Ya know the one I mean—Miss Walker. I'll say good-by, miss." He held out his hand.

"Oh, but Bertram doesn't say good-by like that," exclaimed my pretty but surprising cousin. "Say good-by properly, Bill."

"What, oh!" cried Private Jupp.

And, winking furiously at me, that warrior completed his mission in style.

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"I dessay you've 'eard Bert talk of 'er. No? That's strange!"

Mr. Lyons is an English writer making his magazine bow in America. We met him in his books, especially "Cottage Pie," a collection of sketches humorous, serious, always quaint and pointed. "The Deputy" is a similar sketch, the first of several to come. The letter accompanying them was a delightful bit in itself, and we venture to introduce Mr. Lyons with part of it:

"We have been 'moving house' and your letter has reached me by a round-about route and has met with adventures on the way. Unfortunately, the builders are in possession here, 'restoring' this old house by knocking holes into every wall. My wife and I are at present encamped in the attic. She has no maid and I have no stenographer. Most of my papers are stored away in a cow-shed and the remainder can't be found. Under the circumstances, I can only send you the enclosed half-dozen odd pieces. Perhaps some of these will prove suitable, however. If not, please be kind enough to send them back, as we waste nothing here and I could write more sketches on the other side of the paper."

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Igor's Trail

By David Churchill

THE spikes of McKechnie's boots rang on the pavement. His shadow loomed before and then after as he passed, one by one, the lights that hung like globe-flowers from their slender pedestals. They satisfied him, those new lights. He could not have told just why, though he had heard others call them beautiful—fitting to the new, terraced streets, satin-smooth, which curve around the hills of Seattle like broad gray ribbons, and lead to vistas of bay and mountain incredibly lovely.

McKechnie sensed that the Port of Gold was roomy. In his slow, strong mind, he figured out that it didn't cramp you like other cities. He admitted that sometimes, even there, he was stampeded to get back North where there was more room to spread yourself without stepping on your neighbors.

The ring of his spikes quickened; McKechnie was going home. He was filled with a strange elation as he thought of it, his first home in all his wandering life. For he had been a waif of the plains, picked up by a chance prairie-schooner overflowing with children as his own father's wagon had been. All he could tell was his name, that they had started from Ireland, crossed the ocean and the plains, and that he was lost.

He had grown up anyhow in Seattle, with a meal here, a bed there, from kindly women in wrappers, poor, pitiful and easy—the only ones to care whether he lived or died. At sixteen he had discovered that pelts—of beaver, marten, fox—brought big money and the freedom of wide spaces to the hunter, and that north and west of the mountains they were plentiful. For fourteen years he had hunted in Alaska, when the first big gold-strike shattered his solitude. Then some Indians, his guides and friends, gave him first chance. After that everything was his for the asking, for McKechnie had "struck it rich" in half a dozen places. "Kech," as they called him all through the Yukon basin and down the coast, had fabulous holdings. He had come to stand for the myth of the North, its vast, frozen treasure. In the late nineties and among the gold-seekers, his was the name they conjured with.

McKechnie was late getting home. A government transport had just come in from Nome, laden with the ill and starving, those who had gone North with no conception of the needs or hardships of life inside the Arctic Circle.

McKechnie with others had done what he could to feed and house the derelicts. They had given passage home when possible. One in particular, whom Rickey called the "Dub," had refused. McKechnie had failed to persuade him to take either food or drink. He had left him with Rickey at Billy's mug, silent, dogged and despairing. He would let poor old Rickey help him if he'd let any one!

Igor is as fine a dog as ever followed his master out of Alaska. And McKechnie as fine a master as ever a dog followed. The two of them are in Seattle as this story opens—Seattle of the later nineties; and the story is full of the spirit of the big West. David Churchill knows this country well. Besides, David Churchill is one of the most promising writers that has risen on the magazine horizon for many a day. We are happy to announce other stories, as fresh and dramatic as "Igor," for later numbers of EVERYBODY'S.

It was tough luck, McKechnie ruminated, to be one of the ninety per cent. who had lost out there—who were ashamed to go home and face their wives or the old folks that had spent their last cent to grubstake them! It made him feel almost mean to be going home to the finest house on the bluff—a stone house—the only one on the Port, and set with a regular park around it and servants to wait on him. Yes, and Mary Inness for a housekeeper.

He could not get used to the astounding luck that had sent him Mary Inness, a "Klondike widow," as we called those whose husbands disappeared in the stampede for the North. When McKechnie thought what a nightmare keeping house had been before Mary came and "whipped things into shape," he knew that he would have given up trying to have a home—would have sold out and gone back to Alaska, except for her.

"It was plain hell," he told himself as he swung along, his heart pounding against his ribs with anticipation; "but Mary squared things; she just has the knack of it!"

He smiled in the dark. It was less than a week, but he knew already that it was Mary Inness, and not just her knack that made the big stone house *Illahee*—as the Indian has it—*home*.

HE TURNED into his driveway. He touched the shrubs with his calloused hands; he laid them around the bole of the great madroña-tree, silky as a woman's throat. They were his. He recalled the number and width of the steps up to his porch. There were five: two narrow, one broad and two more narrow. It pleased him, this little familiarity of his with the great stone mansion aloof in its shrubbery, commanding the sweep of bay and mountain—his bay, his mountain, his guardian Coast Range beyond. He felt them out there in the dark, the bay dotted with red-and-gold signal-lights of sleeping ships.

And behind him his hand held the latch of the door of his house. And within was—Mary Inness.

Not all his placers in the North, his banks, his sky-scrapers in the city below the bluff, had thrilled him with the sense of possession like this! The dormant streak of romance in him was awake. His key in the lock would open to new worlds of content, of affection, and the richness of living—food of his long-groping dreams under the Aurora.

The heavy fir door swung in. It was dark. That, he decided, was all right; it was late, four, maybe. Mary Inness had given him up and put out the lights. Her eyes were like lights, he thought, clear and bright; like the lights his mother used to set in the window when he had to come home from the spring in the dark through the peat-bog.

A faint reflection from a street lamp beyond the shrubbery gave him the outline of the inner door. Before he could lay his hand on the door-knob a sound made him turn. In the instant before the descending sand-bag took him full on the temple, he made out a man's face, open-mouthed, shining with sweat. And then he went down without a sound.

II

MORE than the discomfort of a gag in his mouth, McKechnie hated the idea of it. That any man alive could catch him unaware, bind and truss him like a Christmas turkey was enough, but that the Dub, a man known the length and breadth of the territory by the name of "Roses," one of the men he had gamed with up North, and had befriended within the hour, should have put it over on him, was damnable.

There was not another spot on earth where it could have been pulled off, he thought disgustedly. Never in his life had he been off his guard till now, in his own house. Up North no one would have dared attack him. As for his haunts in the Port: respect and fear—yes—and solid liking covered him there.

Still dazed from the blow on his temple, he half realized as he rolled over on his right side that his pocket had been emptied. Turning and wrenching at his tied wrists, he discovered by the bruise of it, that his left pocket still contained the two full pokes of gold-dust. Belt and hip pockets had been turned out down at Billy's for the derelicts from Nome, he remembered. But why, if the Dub had knocked him out to rob him, hadn't he done a thorough job, he wondered dully. The man was a fool, he reflected; couldn't even get away with a hold-up without showing his face!

Rousing gradually, McKechnie began a systematic working of hands and wrists to free himself. To his disgust, every effort seemed to tighten the hemp cord. A trick knot, he decided. For once the Dub had done a thorough job! His respect for him rose while he struggled impotently with the knot.

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And he told her under the Madroña, simply and haltingly, with poverty of phrase, but with the wealth of a man's love that is like incense.

The door was open. Outside, the dawn of early autumn strove with the mist. McKechnie, with the philosophy of the wilderness, rolled himself into as comfortable a position as possible to wait till some of the servants should come. He blamed himself for his easiness with them, that he found himself alone in his own house at four in the morning. It was a profanely silly idea of his, anyhow, he decided. What did the likes of him want with a home, he asked himself, and called himself a fool with the itch to see his gold in a monument everybody would notice. Any man who tried to keep a house without a wife was a fool. And a house set in a park was a regular trap, as it had proved.

He made excuse to himself for his

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weakness. The last long winter of stark, brutal loneliness back of beyond had made the thoughts of the terraced homes that crowned the hill above Eliott Bay like the thought of safe harbor to a sailor. The life and the laughter he had heard from them, and the riches of living he had begun to realize that lay outside his ken, these he had thought to buy with his gold!

He writhed in the sense of folly, of failure to realize his dream, even faintly. Mary Inness would never look at him—why should she, a splendid woman like her? She was just doing what he paid her to do. In getting the place, he had made a new wrack of troubles for himself, buying and fixing, hiring feeble-minded servants who ran when his back was turned. A hut for him from now on, he thought with dimmed vision, a hut, a camp-stove, a bunk, and Igor, his huskie.

He roused on the thought of Igor. He had heard nothing of the dog since the sand-bagging. His gorge rose. If the Dub had harmed or stolen Igor, his life wasn't worth the pelt of a rat! McKechnie promised himself with a strong word, that he would have the law of the North on him, if it took the rest of his life to track the man down. North, a man's dog was his life.

McKechnie could no longer lie still. To all his uncouth calls, hindered by the gag, there had been no response. While the miner struggled and rolled, the dawn quickened; the fleece above the mountain gathered light; the mist lifted. The morning wind drove a flutter of blue and emerald shadows across the water of the bay and touched his snow-burned eyes like fingers, cool, fresh and caressing. His sight blurred with sudden, overwhelming wretchedness. His pent-up desires, his dim and groping ideals, his forlorn and abortive efforts to make a home, combined with his helplessness and the agony of strained muscles to throw him into a grotesque anger, an unreasoning, childish peevishness.

IT CENTERED on Mary Inness. Where in the devil was the woman? Did he or didn't he pay her to look after him and his house? *Illahee!* Any Indian hut was more home than this!

The cool fingers of wind touched him again, as he had seen her touch Igor's pointed head. The madroña outside was straight, like her back. How smooth it's bark had felt to his hand! After all, she would naturally think a man could take care of himself one night.

"I blame myself," her voice was saying when he realized her presence. Her hands were busy with the knots behind his back, her breathing hurried. "I blame myself very much—I should have come home last night, but I thought Joseph would be here—and I felt I must try to find——"

McKechnie grew quiet under her hands as she leaned over him, tugging at the knots.

"I—there were things I had to see to——"

Suddenly she sat back, looked sidelong at the open door and then down at the knot, her eyes darkening. And then, mechanically and without effort, her fingers did the trick. McKechnie shook himself free. She stood erect, looking down into the kindly eyes in his red face.

"What do you know about that?" he asked, looking up, abashed before her direct gaze. "Tackling a man in his own house!"

The intensity of questioning in her eyes was painful; she seemed still begging his forgiveness for herself or for some one else. She forced a difficult question to the test of her own ears:

"Have you any—idea who did it?"

"Oh, some busted Klondiker, I guess," he said easily; "lots of 'em down from Nome yesterday."

"Did he—take anything?" she asked breathlessly.

McKechnie, warmed by her interest, was strongly impelled to tell her. But women took things so differently from men, he reflected, you never could tell which way they'd jump. Instead of answering her, he took out the two remaining pokes and laid them in her hands. She surprised him with a smile of tremulous relief, and when she returned them, she held to his hands, helping him to his feet as he rose stiffly.

"I am glad," she said, turning away.

McKechnie was awkwardly conscious that his purpose of telling her he was done with the whole farce of a home was oozing from him. In spite of his great adequate bulk and the jaw of a man who takes what he wants, he was timid with her. She had reached the door before he had succeeded in cursing himself into shape.

"Miss—Mrs. Inness——" he began.

She turned; it seemed to him she always stood sidewise toward him; was always going away. Her eyes disturbed him intolerably.

"If—you'd start the fire," he managed lamely, "fix the hot-water heater. I guess I'd like a soak——"

"Certainly," she answered, while he grew moist from head to foot with confusion because he had asked her to wait on him in that intimate way.

He could not have told just why he felt such shame; he argued with himself that it would have been worse to go out into her kitchen and light the heater for himself. He was grateful out of all proportion when she added, "With pleasure! And I will lay out your things, too, if Joseph doesn't get back."

"You're a good girl," he said haltingly. He could find no other words to convey his unbounded regard.

A flush warmed her eyes. "I certainly appreciate your lenience," she said impulsively. "If I could explain how I came to be detained all night, I feel sure you would pardon what must seem to you like negligence."

"There now!" he said, scratching the back of his wrist with embarrassment. "We're squared up, ain't we?"

Her mouth, the mouth McKechnie had called to himself plucky, grew soft with laughter. She caught her lower lip between her teeth and disappeared through the swing door.

III

HE HEARD her light, leisurely footsteps as she moved about the kitchen. In his thoughts he followed each homely little task—saw her close her eyes when she lighted the gas; saw her turn the water at the sink and freshen her finger-tips after it. The clink of dishes and silver, all the cheery sounds of breakfast-getting sang in his ears. He listened avidly, almost guiltily; it was all for him!

"Mary!" he whispered haltingly. He could feel the hair of his head lifting at such temerity. The man whose loves till now had been primitive, predatory and of the moment, trembled with the discovery that Mary Inness was dear to him in a new way. He groped for understanding of it. She was precious to him; he could come no nearer to it than that, except in feeling. He vibrated with happiness, afraid to move for fear of losing something of its fulness. He wondered if she could possibly know. He ached to tell her how it was with him, and rebelled because he knew he could never find the words to do it as he wished.

"Mary!" he whispered again. "Mary!"

What a name! What a wonderful name was Mary!

MARY INNES swung the door carefully, backing in with her filled tray. She was startled to see him standing just as she had left him. Yet he was not as she had left him. He was no longer timid. The power of his manhood filled the room like an electric force. Though he moved no more than a tree; though he was silent as the pregnant earth, she knew what had happened. She knew and she was afraid.

In him every sense was becoming alert. Little by little his thoughts, always slow and strong, began to move swiftly to match hers. He noticed that her steps quickened about the table; more than ever she seemed to him always turned away from him—she was afraid! That must not be.

He turned himself about and went out and up the stairs. For one moment Mary Inness covered her eyes. It seemed to her the tide of life was forever dragging away her foothold.

"He must not—care," she thought desperately. "He must not!"

McKechnie had slowly bathed and dressed. Now in fresh flannel shirt and brown canvas trousers, his laced boots of moosehide newly oiled, he descended. He had figured it all out from Mary Inness's side and then from his own. Perhaps she was not a free woman. He must know. His thoughts turned to Rickey, the friend of his wanderings. Rickey had lots of time for gossip, now his feet were so bad he couldn't go up North again. He seemed to know everybody that ever had stampeded, yet McKechnie decided, slowly, that he would not ask. There was in Kech a reserve at all times, enhanced now by the growing sense of Mary Inness's fineness, her pervading presence. He decided that he must risk it, let her tell him herself, after he had tried to make her understand how it was with him. He would know then whether to stay or go North again and get her out of sight. But he would wait and watch her. She must not be troubled.

A woman like Mary Inness has her defenses. She was prepared for McKechnie. His very directness and simplicity were a danger as well as an ally to which she meant to appeal. But there was no need. McKechnie came in and sat down quietly to a breakfast that amazed him, as all she did amazed him.

"She just has the knack," he thought, admiring the blue bowl with a suffused water-lily floating in it; the fruit and the

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blue jug of yellow cream. What should be hot was hot and crisp; his glass of water was beaded with frost. Yet without fuss or hurry she came and went; a touch here, a tidying hand where all looked perfect to him before. His sense of well-being was complete because of her.

This morning he saw her in detail as he had not seen her before. Her smooth head, of the soft, bright brown of a marten's spring pelt, with a little wave on one side shaped like a snow-shoe, thrilled him. Her fine teeth, her clear smooth skin and straight back. The white garment, half apron, that covered but did not hide the slow grace of her movements, seemed to him lovelier than anything he had ever seen a woman wear. All the charm and illusion that clothe the beloved, enfolded her. Kech was restively happy.

Mary Inness became sure that he would not speak. She had planned while he was above-stairs to withdraw from the situation—it was the only way. Yet she did love *Illahee!*

McKechnie had planned better than that. "If I should have to go North," he said, as she poured his second cup of coffee, "I want you should stay right here. I'll fix it up at the bank so you can get whatever you need."

Slowly she brightened out of her reserve. How thoughtful he was! "Just how much would you like me to spend?" she asked with growing animation.

"Whatever you like," he told her; "fixings inside or out—garden—posies."

She grasped the back of the chair as she stood opposite him. Her pleasure brought his great laugh. Women, he formulated, even the best of them, love to spend a man's poke!

"I warn you," she cried gaily, "I shall squander! This house just cries for beautiful seasoned furnishings."

Suddenly freed from all restraint, boyishly light of heart, McKechnie stood up, stretched his great arms and widened his chest in a mighty breath, expelling it like a walrus.

Mary Inness moved to the window.

"I shall have a garden with a wall—an *espalier* for grapes and peaches!" she cried. He watched her measure the spaces without, her eyes alive and alight.

"Go to it," he said heartily; "have all the fun you can. It's all the darn dust's good for."

IV

THERE was a banging and scratching at the back door.

"Igor! By cracky!" McKechnie swore, struck with the realization that Mary Inness had made him forget the absent dog. It was she who opened to Prince Igor. The dog was clamorous, on his hind legs, head shaking in short yelps. McKechnie trod on his toes.

"Down, sir!"

"Don't hurt him!" Mary Inness begged. "Can't you see why he is so excited? He's broken away—" she held up a frayed rope-end.

Something implacable, deadly, rose in McKechnie. He hid it from her.

"Good boy," he said with sinister pleasantry; "hope you didn't finish him."

Igor pawed at his master's chest, his pointed head within a foot of the miner's. He yowled and whined the tale of his tormentor and thrust out his dagger of a tongue toward the face he loved. He cried softly with almost human speech, his disappointment in his failure to crunch his enemy's bones; to tear him to bits.

McKechnie scowled understanding.

"Got away from you, did he?" he interpreted.

Igor lifted his nose to heaven in a wolf howl.

McKechnie felt the dog over: his great neck and chest, his feet and knees, his splendid long barrel; there was no sign of violence on him.

"Never mind," he said over and over, "we'll get him, dog. Never mind!"

He turned his pocket inside out for Igor's inspection.

"How is that?" he asked, as the dog's fangs closed on a ragged cap. "Left his card, didn't he? That's our sailing directions, pupsky. Think we can trail him? Well, I guess!"

In his fierce glee McKechnie forgot that it was not good for such a woman as Mary to see. Neither was the cold blue of his eyes.

"If this was Alaska, the Dub would swing before night," he said in a muted roar. "Come, dog, get a move. Mush!"

Down across the velvet lawn they went, on the run. At the bluff McKechnie took the descent in a leap, careless of his neighbor's posy-bed. Igor led, whining at every step, nose to the ground. From the brink of *Illahee*, Mary Inness, white now and trembling, watched them go down, across garden and terrace, past the huddled Indian shacks to the tracks, and across them to the level of the wharves.

V

STRAIGHT to Billy's mug went Igor, up to the bar and around to a table where Rickey sat alone, waiting. The lined face and dim eyes of that relic of the North turned up to McKechnie in both fear and welcome. For Rickey, life and adventure were over except through Kech, and it was understood between them that Rickey, for his own good, was not to drink until his friend came. It was McKechnie's sole tyranny over the broken miner

Twice, McKechnie ousted him, to the dog's delight, before the train had gathered such headway that it was not safe to try it again.

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who was his pensioner. A half-filled glass stood before Rickey.

"I ain't been home at all," he said; "what was the use—it was four when you left, and the boys still talking."

McKechnie eyed him keenly. Rickey shook his head.

"No, I ain't," he said, "this is the first glass."

McKechnie decided it was true. He sat down and leaned over toward his friend.

"Seen the Dub since I went up the hill?"

"He just left here," Rickey answered, surprised. "He paid for this Scotch—said it was on *you*. That's why I didn't wait."

"It *was* on me!" McKechnie returned grimly as he rose to follow the dog. "Happen to know where he was headed?"

Rickey did not, and McKechnie dodged out of the door after Igor, who was whining with confusion from so many scents and noises. He picked up the trail again almost at once; it led to the railroad station direct, and there he lost it again.

The station-master knew McKechnie by sight. He said he could not remember selling a ticket to any bum in particular. A lot of them had slept on the seats and gone on the early eastbound train. McKechnie had expected that. Many of the fares which he himself had provided for the miners from the Nome transport had been for eastern points.

"No go, pupsky," he said; "this time he's slipped us."

Igor had not given up. Suddenly he was off again, nose down, toward the wharves. McKechnie strode after him. At a tipsy-roofed curio-shop, hung with odds and ends of Oriental trade, and overflowing onto the wharf with sacks of dormant, leafless shrubs, Igor paused, retraced and entered. He was quicker now, jaws chattering, head darting. Once he bayed like a hound when the multitude of retracing steps worried him, snapping his jaw in the midst of it with frightful effect on the Oriental.

Once more he had the trail. Up from the wharves to the railroad-track, and along them to the freight-depot he held it, loping and whining. There, beside a consignment of freight, he stopped, yelped and began to dig and tear at a queer-shaped bundle covered with sacking.

The freight-agent came on the run. "Call that dog off!" he shouted.

"Quit it, babe," McKechnie admonished mildly, absorbed in reading the directions on the sacking: "Rose Crag, Washington." That was all.

Igor sat back and waited further commands.

"WHEN does this freight pull out?" McKechnie inquired.

The agent was surly. "What's it to you?"

McKechnie lifted him suddenly by the scruff of his neck and set him upon the sack. Igor, delighted with the prospect, crouched and growled. Thiswas not the same scent, but it would do in the absence of the other.

"When does this go to Rose Crag?" McKechnie continued his mild inquiry.

"This afternoon at three," the man answered resentfully, trying to loosen the miner's grip on his neck; "let me go, you big bully!"

"What is in that bag?" McKechnie asked.

A flood of profanity was his answer. McKechnie lifted him and set him down again, repeating his question.

The man sprang up with a cry of pain. "Rose-bushes," he snarled; "there's *rose-bushes* in it, and I'll report you to the chief of police so quick my tracks'll smoke, you condemned fool!"

"Tell the chief McKechnie spanked you," the Klondiker answered, suddenly making good his word.

He stood a thoroughly chastened freight-agent on his feet. "Anything else to go with this?" he asked pleasantly.

He was shown a crate containing two sashes of glass such as gardeners use; ten sacks of coal, fifty pounds each, and a bundle of steam-piping.

McKechnie looked at Igor. "At three o'clock we pick up the trail right here, dog," he said.

VI

AS THEY moved up the track, his slow, strong mind grappled with the problem. What was the connection between the Dub's nickname of Roses and this address, Rose Crag? Sounded like a fancy gentleman's summer-place. Why the coal-sacks and the window-sashes? What was there in that consignment of freight worth the risk of robbing a man? He told himself he would find out. Meantime there was something to attend to.

At his bank on First Avenue and Angeline Street, he opened an account for Mary Inness. And then, slowly and thoughtfully, with a sense of risking all on a single throw, he ascended the hill to his home—*Illahee*.

Mary Inness was in the garden. She seemed beautiful to him, in her blue garden apron and turned-back sunbonnet. And now, as he looked about him, he understood for the first time that the sweep of bay and mountain was not only "roomy"—it surprised his eyes, arrested his breath with its loveliness. And he knew, with a flooding certainty when she came toward him down the path under the silky-barked madroña, that all things had grown beautiful through Mary Inness. That her eyes, like the light set by his mother in the window for the little fellow coming from the spring through the dark, had brightened all the paths he might walk in for the rest of his life. And he knew, with a throb of his great heart, that whether she could love him or not, it would always be with him as now.

And he told her so there, under the madroña; simply and haltingly, with poverty of phrase, but with the wealth of a man's love that is like incense.

"If I were free I should give you a different answer," she told him, "but I am not."

He waited. She would tell him why when she was ready.

"John Inness had frittered away his own life and mine," she said, "till I sent him off. I told him I would wait two years for him to make good."

"When was that?" he asked.

"It is almost two years ago," she answered. "It will be two at Christmas."

"Know anything about 'im?"

"No—that is—oh, I can't tell you!" she cried.

"Don't cry," he begged huskily. "I'd like to ask one more thing, but I won't if it makes you feel bad."

"Ask it."

"If he makes good and comes back, will you go with him again?"

"Yes, I will go with him," she answered sadly. "He is not practical—nor dependable, but I—love him, as dearly as a son! Though he has made me desperately unhappy, I think sometimes he is more unfortunate than—wrong. He has dreams—aspirations that obsess him—."

She turned to him with wet eyes, serious, a little flushed, wistful. The bonnet had fallen back and the top of her head drew him, held him with unbearable sense of loss. Yet to his nature at that moment, to love was a more imperative necessity than to be loved. His hand lifted and hovered over her, his lean jaw quivered.

"Mary! Mary!" He whispered. "What a woman!" She had not disappointed him in anything. He touched the little wave in her hair shaped like a snow-shoe.

Mary watched him. "Kech!" she broke out at last, "you're the finest man I ever knew. You deserve the love—the whole love of any woman. God knows why we give our love to unworthy—weak—but we do. I love John Inness, not as a son, but with the one, final love of my heart. I have almost died since I sent him away—he isn't strong enough to make good alone—he isn't iron like you—even like me. Together we might have accomplished, because he is fine—full of ideas—patient to foolhardiness——"

She drew back, dismayed at her broken reserve. McKechnie was breathing deeply. God, what a woman! White, white clear through! Her lips were pale; it was with difficulty that she spoke again:

"He meant all right, but it just wasn't in him to shelter—to provide as a woman must be provided for if she is to fulfil her life. Kech, I have a feeling that—life has been too much for him. I know he would have come back to me if he were still living. It will be two years Christmas— If he doesn't come then, I shall know—that he is no longer living—he couldn't stay away—I know him so well—he couldn't——"

She was shivering and gripping herself; it was an old, old hurt, McKechnie saw. All the innate chivalry in him yearned toward her, and his arm reached across her shoulders, man fashion, and held her like a vise. It unnerved her. With a gust of passionate gratitude she laid her head against him.

"Even if I should find I am—free, Kech, there isn't enough left of me to—to make you happy," she told him. "You should have—what you deserve——"

McKechnie was awed, his breath irregular, and his heart pounding; without precedent or experience. With a deep kindness that found somehow its own expression, he said: "If you're alone, you'll come to me. Will you promise me that?"

She bowed her head, and with reverent, unaccustomed lips he kissed her where the bright hair parted above her forehead.

VII

AFTER McKechnie had tipped off the freight-conductor and climbed with Igor into the groaning, shunting freight-car containing the consignment for Rose Crag, he decided that the dog had better have stayed at home. And he would have preferred to have Mary Inness in Igor's care. With that in mind, he shoved the dog out of the open door with a command to

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"Mush!" Igor, to whom a train was new and exhilarating, thought it a game. He sprang back through the door of the moving car upon his master. Twice, McKechnie ousted him, to the dog's delight, before the train had gathered such headway that it was not safe to try it again.

As they pounded along under the gray clouds of November, through lush meadowlands of the Sound country aflame still with tiger-lilies and purple ironweed, past tuli swamps and the chaparral that springs up to cover denuded timberland, on and up into the forests of fir and cedar, he thought of Mary Inness. How she would love that flare of tiger-lilies—like a prairie fire! Here in the deep woods she would be looking up into those feathery tops, her throat stretched out, silky as the madroña. She was as real to him as though she sat beside him in the open door of the freight-car.

McKechnie shook himself. Slowly and with grim patience his mind began to trail the ways of the North where he had known the 'Dub' men called 'Roses' first, going in over the Pass, because he made such a mess of his packing—for no worse—he had been nicknamed the 'Dub.' That was before they left the timber-line and struck the boulders in a fog like custard. Then suddenly they had come out above the clouds into the blinding light of sun on snow, torture to eyes used to the soft Pacific air. But while the rest of them were cursing the Dub had cried:

"What sunshine! What roses it would grow!"

They had thought him loco—clean loco.

"Roses!" He had shouted, over and over, turning himself about in the sun, as though he were bathing himself. "With stems like saplings! When I come out with my millions, I'm going to build me a palace above the mists and grow my fill of *roses!*"

McKechnie had wondered then what a man did with roses! Now he could understand. Some women just went with things like that. Probably the Dub liked somebody a whole lot——

A man-hunt to McKechnie had always been as primitive and conclusive—as free from personal malice, and as full of zest—as if he were a cougar. He was startled now by missing the zest. He searched his mind for it as for a mislaid treasure.

"The man that stole Igor—that trussed and gagged me—has got to fight," he reminded himself.

He remembered Mary's face when he had said: "If this was Alaska, the Dub would swing before night!"

"Mary wouldn't hurt a fly," he told Igor with a tender acknowledgment of the difference between men and women.

The dog whined and crowded against him. He threw his arm around the bristling neck, aquiver for his caress.

"We like her," he murmured huskily. "We like her a whole lot, don't we, dog?"

Igor's soft, intermittent whine, like a stuttering ratchet, assented. McKechnie caught him in a hug that squeezed out a sharp yelp.

VIII

THE train stopped at the last log water-tank in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains, took on a fresh engine at the rear and started its climb over the divide. Forests were left behind, snags of burnt trees displaced them. A wild desolation, immense, wastrel, so far as vision carried, reached into the folds of the valley below; there were only ravaged forests, impenetrable to man, deserted of beast. Yet somewhere in this dead land was "Rose Crag!"

The ravaged trees gave place to rocks. Out on to a huge hogback, with precipitous, shaly sides, crept the train. The creases were filled with snow. Up and up they wound into a blanket of cloud, now balanced on a narrow ridge, now hugging the base of an invisible peak, or tilted out over a precipice.

Inness was no match for the big Klondiker.

Being with a woman like that gentled a man—took the fight out of him, McKechnie ruminated. But if she had been at home the night of the sand-bagging and the Dub had harmed her—his muscles swelled. The man had done enough mischief, he argued, grasping after his old, implacable purpose. He would settle with him in a fair fight.

The brakes screeched and the long train shuddered to a standstill. The freight-conductor descended from the roof by the ladder and entered the door. McKechnie drew back as a man appeared in the opening, a lantern held above his head. It was the Dub.

"Any duffle for Rose Crag?" he queried.

"Consignment for Rose Crag," answered the conductor.

He dragged the bags forward and counted them off as he dumped them outside: "Ten sacks, fifty pounds each; one crate, the same; piping—let her go the same; one sack shrubs, twenty pounds."

"All here?"

"Righto."

"Damage?"

"Seventeen cartwheels and four bits for the haul."

"I have only dust. Here's something over an ounce."

"Weighed it?"

"Yes."

"All right."

The freight-conductor swung down to the platform and took his lantern from his arm. Three times he threw circles of light in rainbows of mist. Like a shudder of the spine, the train trembled from engine to engine, clashed between its vertebræ, strained ahead and moved forward. The conductor ran up the ladder to his brakes.

"Good night," he called to the solitary figure lifting a sack in the faint halo of the lantern. "Good night," answered the Dub, already a shadow far in the rear.

McKechnie waited till a turn hid him and stepped out on to the ladder with a command to Igor, whining behind him. As he swung a leg from the ladder and dropped to the ground a curve in the track tilted the car and the door slid shut upon the dog. A despairing wail rent the solitude as the train disappeared around the mountainside, gathering speed in the descent.

IX

MCKECHNIE was concerned. His first fear was that the door might slide open and the dog jump when the train was at full speed. A train was new to the Alaska dog. But with the philosophy of experience McKechnie recovered himself shortly. Igor would watch his chance at the first water-tank or where they dropped the extra engine. The freight-conductor had been well tipped—would have his hands full, anyhow, if he tried to steal the dog.

It might mean a fifty-mile back trip for Igor—maybe a hundred, but barring snow, the huskie would find him.

"Think you're in a peck of trouble, pupsky," he said aloud as he turned his back on the echoing shrieks of the engines already miles away over the divide. "You are, dog, but you'll make it. Chancy, but a sporting proposition."

He relished his own and the dog's fitness; their zest for adventure.

"We're good fighting stuff," he growled, "you and me, babe."

He could not forego the comfort of the dog's listening ear, though Igor was so far out of hearing.

Nine sacks of coal still lay beside the track with the crated sashes and the sack of shrubs.

"Rose-bushes," McKechnie said, suppressing a grim laugh. "We'll have a planting when you get back, dog—good as tombstones. Roses!"

He selected a cleft between the blasted rocks and edged himself in till he was all but invisible; he would watch the man sweat for a while. It looked like a night's work for the Dub to "cache and carry all that duffle to his dump," if it took so long to get up one sack!

The night grew thicker with fog. It was just at freezing-point, McKechnie decided. A pale luminosity, as though far above there was a moon, gave vague outlines to the pile of freight and the rocky mountainsides that rose abruptly at either hand, disappearing upward in the mist, leaving the tracks cradled between them. He noticed with a curious reaction, a softening which he resisted

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instinctively, that the man had taken his coat off to cover the sack of dormant bushes.

"Now wouldn't that jar you!" he cried below his breath. "Who would do a thing like that?" he asked himself, and knew the answer before he had asked it. Mary Inness would. She would do anything that was kind. And, suddenly, like sunlight in his veins, McKechnie felt the wild beauty of the place. The chill air caressed his face.

"Mary!" he whispered, afraid to move lest he spill one drop of his happiness.

The Dub was coming. Once more he lifted a sack of coal, adjusted it to his back and disappeared in the fog. Once more the old hunter in McKechnie rose. The man he was tracking had tried to steal Igor! He should fight!

IT MIGHT have been two hours later that McKechnie decided to follow and see the dump, as he called it. The man had hoisted the last sack but one to his back. He had discarded his lantern and a stick he first carried, and he staggered with exhaustion. In spite of everything, McKechnie was conscious of a growing respect for him. The Dub had learned somewhere to pack! Determined to follow him McKechine rose and waited, till there was a safe distance between them, lifting the last sack to his own back. It was the sack of shrubs, covered with the man's coat. It was awkward and long, and secured with wire outside the sacking. McKechnie adjusted the wire about his body conveniently and followed the unsteady, slow-moving figure ahead of him.

Several times he lost sight of it, but picked it up again without difficulty, though the way was long and winding, and often steeply precipitous, with rocks that seemed boulders when they must be surmounted. There were sudden switchbacks, too, so that at times he thought they had gone a mile to gain a few feet of the ascent, and he had to wait for fear the man would hear him from the trail above.

And then in a moment he had lost him. Though he stood on the spot where he had last seen him, he was not ahead as he should have been. When McKechnie stopped and listened, he could hear nothing above him or beyond.

It was growing darker, as though the shadow of some towering peak had been cast between the moon and the bank of cloud that enveloped him. Yet McKechnie saw no way for the Dub to have disappeared so suddenly. On his left was an abrupt fall, a precipice as nearly as he could make out; at his right, a wall of rock. The path seemed to go forward, a narrow trail. McKechnie knew he would have heard a fall, had there been an accident. There was only one solution: the Dub had climbed the face of the rock.

A glint of glass showed him the crate, leaning against the wall, secured by a rope that went up out of sight. He felt along the rock and found crannies, footholds recently chipped out. Spiked and accustomed though he was, McKechnie hesitated before that precipitous and unknown wall. A slip, with only the narrow trail for landing, meant almost surely a fall into the depths below.

All thought of taking the man's life had left him. The Dub was too game! McKechnie could not have told why he followed him, if not to fight, but follow he must, even up that bare face of a rock!

Twice he thought the sack on his back would throw him. Each time he recovered himself, he swore a new respect for the man who had gone up ahead of him. It was about thirty feet, he figured, as he set his spike in the last narrow toe-hold. His hands were gripping the edge when he realized that he had come out above the clouds.

Behind him it spread like a floor of silver to the nearest peak, miles away. Before him, from a level space ten or fifteen feet wide, bare rocks rose into a vault so limpid, so infinite in its blue reaches that he was awed. Flooding it all was a moon more nearly a pale sun, searching, all-pervading light, intimate in its nearness. In its compelling radiance the Dub stood uncovered, his eyes afar over the cloud-tops. In his shoulders, his clasped hands, hanging limp, his knees bent with weariness, his uplifted face, was the dogged despair, the pathos of a whipped child.

McKechnie, was in the grip of emotions strange and troublesome. If he could, he would have crept out of that compelling light. It got into his blood and softened him. The blue vault, open to infinity above him, made his heart cry out for Mary, just Mary in all the universe.

He looked at the man, the only living thing on that rock, flung up into the sky. The thought of Mary was so near that he barely wondered when something she had said came to him, in this place, and because of that silent, disheartened creature standing there against the starlit vault:

"I love him as though he were my son, Kech, though he is not dependable—he is just a dreamer—a dear boy."

McKechnie's hands tightened on the rock. His breath came hard; all his implacable purpose against the man rushed back on him. Somehow he knew, before the proofs arrayed themselves one by one in his mind, that this man was John Inness.

They had called him Roses because he had dawdled away his life for roses, because he was hipped about roses. With a woman like Mary Inness to love him, he had "frittered away his life and hers," she had said. He was at it now, damn him, while Mary waited. At it with money he had stolen from him, McKechnie, who had just offered to stake him to bed and board till he could get on his feet again. Roses!

McKECHNIE saw red now. This was the man who had stolen Igor—who had followed him home and sandbagged him——

"He trussed me—gagged me—" he choked.

This was the man that stood between him and Mary, this—DUB!

With a roar he was up over the edge and upon him. Inness recognized him before the impact of McKechnie's body threw him. Inness was no match for the great Klondiker, but the sack of roses was still wired to Kech's back. At an unlucky moment it reared up, pitched him on his side too near the edge for him to recover himself. Before Inness could turn and catch him he was gone. He struck the trail below with a fearful thud, over ended and pitched into the depths.

Inness, still dazed by the sudden appearance of an enemy and his own immediate release, crawled painfully to the edge of the rock and looked down. The cloud-bank gave back no sign. Like a glistening pall it covered mountain and precipice and the silent presence below.

All feeling of enmity or fear of McKechnie left him. As well as he could for his bruises, he crept down the face of rock to the trail.

"McKechnie!" he shouted. "Kech!"

His own words came back to him as from the walls of a cavern.

Taking the rope from the case of windows leaning against the rock, he tied it about his body under the armpits. It was secured above, he knew, enough to bear his weight. He eased himself over the edge of the trail and began to lower himself. In this position, his feet braced against a perpendicular wall, his weight upheld by his grip on the rope, he went down, foot by foot to its full length, fifty, sixty, eighty feet it was—he knew.

There was no evidence of McKechnie's fall, nothing but the bald cliff. Once more he called. His voice echoed hollow as in a well.

A wolf howl rose from just below him, prolonged and terrible. His hair rose. McKechnie was unconscious if not dead—the brute would make short work of him. No man could stand off and let a thing like that go on! Inness was beside himself—he would drop and fight the beast. Once more the howl rose like a siren, but this time it broke into the baying of a hound.

"IGOR!" he called, coughing hoarsely.

A rapid fire of barks and yelps answered him. The shale rattled with the dog's effort to reach the human voice above him.

"Stay with him," Inness called. "I'm coming."

For an instant he hesitated. The fall might disable him, and then there would be no chance for either of them. Yet to climb up the rope and then down the trail, which, as well as he could judge, would lead him to the dog, was too long. A groan from McKechnie decided him. Loosing the rope from his armpits, he lowered himself to its full length and let go.

He fell almost upon the dog. Igor bristled and snapped, but his need was great. He led his enemy to McKechnie, lying across a stunted fir-tree that had broken his fall. Kech was unconscious, but his heart was beating. Inness felt for injuries, but found no fracture.

McKechnie was a heavy man. Inness was light, yet he unhesitatingly shouldered him, shifting him across his back and under his arms till he was balanced, a limp, dead weight.

"It's up to you, dog," he said; then, "find us the trail. Mush!"

Without hesitation Igor picked his way between rocks and scrub, around steep buttresses of the mountain, unerring, unhurried, to the trail, below the first switchback. From there it was only a matter of endurance.

The sun was pouring down on Rose Crag when McKechnie, still unconscious, but breathing regularly, was tucked into Inness's blankets under the log shelter up on the rocks above the clouds.

Inness, his hands still bleeding from the rope that had lifted McKechnie up the face of the rock, his shoulder wrenched to agony, had fallen where he knelt by the bunk, in a sleep of exhaustion.

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"Come, dog," McKechnie muttered. "We'll mush."

X

McKECHNIE lay stretched on the rock in the sun. Inness was packing coal up the trail again. Twenty sacks were stacked just outside the door of the shelter, twenty more waited below the face of rock to be lifted. McKechnie knew that coal had got to last the winter—that Inness had spent his pokes, and that already each day the thermometer dropped to zero by dusk. With another snow-storm or two the trail would be impassable.

The log hut, in an elbow of the rock, roofed with the two window-sashes, made a snug greenhouse. McKechnie admitted to himself that there never were such roses. "Stems like saplings" sure enough; leaves green as the tundras up North under the midnight sun. In five weeks the dormant bushes had made a growth he had never seen outside Alaska in nightless summer. The leaves seemed to climb and curl around and above the buds in the blaze of sun through rarefied air.

One bud would blossom soon, perhaps in the night. Inness watched over it moment by moment, as one green, ruffled sepal after another parted from the bud—a velvet dome of flame, with the bloom and the size of a ripe peach.

To lie up there in the sun, on top of the world, and see roses blooming and then watch Inness go down through the gray floor of fleece that was the top of a cloud made McKechnie think of fairy-tales his mother used to tell, of the world above the earth, to which *Jack* climbed on his beanstalk. It was no wonder a man went loco with such an idea in his head and no money to put it across. Even now what way was there for Inness to realize on it, cut off as he soon would be for the winter?

Inness stretched himself wearily in the lee of the rock. The east wind was icy, though the sun was so hot.

"It will blossom to-morrow," he said somberly, "and to-morrow is Christmas."

McKechnie studied him as he had for the past five weeks. Though he had come to understand the man who had taken him in and shared with him, yet whenever he thought of Mary, the old, implacable anger against John Inness came back. How could a man with a wife like that keep away?

"Inness," he began, determined to have it out, "Inness, did you swipe Igor?"

Inness ran his slender fingers through Igor's fur. Igor endured it.

"No," he said, "I didn't. I tied him up below the terrace, to get him out of the way while I rolled you."

McKechnie put this with other slowly accumulating evidence. He believed it.

"Will you tell me," he pursued, "why you sandbagged me—trussed me up like a Christmas turkey, with trick knots, when you could have had the pokes you took for the asking?"

Inness turned his tired eyes out over the valleys and peaks, toward the line of living blue that glistened in the distance. It was the bay below the terraced city. Beyond towered the hooded mountain, but little removed from its nearness to the harbor. A little nerve in his cheek began to draw and tremble.

"I guess perhaps I can tell you," he said slowly.

"Didn't you know you could have it? What you needed?" McKechnie insisted.

"I was about crazy," Inness admitted. "You had it all. I had nothing."

"Why didn't you take more that night?" McKechnie demanded grimly. "You were a piker, even at that!"

The nerve in Inness's cheek jerked continuously now.

"I took just what I lost to you up in Nome one night, with the dice—my whole winter's wages working another man's claim," he answered without bitterness.

McKechnie lifted himself suddenly to his elbow, chin and eye truculent. "Man," he pursued relentlessly, "when you went North didn't you leave a wife waiting for you to make good?"

"Don't!" cried Inness, drawn to his feet with misery. "If I had taken what it cost me to go North, and had come up here to begin with, I'd have made good! That was all she asked of me—to make good. I'd puttered with her life and mine till she couldn't stand it——"

That was what Mary said, McKechnie thought, carefully just. Another thing she had said came to him. He was on the trail now of what he must know. "No—that is—I can't tell you." Then there were the trick knots she had untied so easily, and her question about his losing his pokes. McKechnie was suddenly glad he had not told her of the theft. She had come on him early in the morning like that, when he felt the meanest, and he had almost told her.

Slowly and carefully McKechnie pursued his trail, though it was leading him to a fearful thing: where had Mary Inness been that night? And though he knew, he could not change toward her, whatever the answer, he put his final question.

"If you had a wife waiting at home for for you, why did you come up here without seeing her?"

Inness threw up his arms with the rage of his intolerable pain. "My God, man!" he cried, "I did try! *Mary was gone!*"

Now he knew. Mary had been searching all that night for her husband just on the chance that he might be among the derelicts from Nome and might go to their old apartment to look for her.

XI

McKECHNIE roused in the moonlight coming through the unshaded glass roof of the shelter that was both greenhouse and living-room. Inness slept heavily in the upper bunk. From where he lay on the floor, Igor lifted muffled inquiry.

"Come, dog," McKechnie muttered, "we'll mush."

As they passed the roses, he bent to look at the bud. It was open. He glanced at Inness, hesitated, and then plucked it, buttoning it carefully inside his coat.

Once over the cliff and down the face of the rock, they traveled swiftly in the crisp night air. The trail was hard with Inness's recent packing of coal.

"Train westbound around two, dog—

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express. We'll just flag it and pay the damage."

Igor whimpered assent.

"Up North by the first boat for us, pupsky," brooded the big miner; "we'll hie us where we belong—a cabin and a camp-stove. We'll leave *Illahee* for Mary Inness."

At the name, Igor, trailing ahead, lifted his voice.

"She needs it," McKechnie argued. "She ought to have it. She's just got the knack——"

His eyes blurred, his great shoulders swayed. "*Illahee*," McKechnie muttered, "she sure makes it—home. Mary——"

He drew a quick breath.

"Mush there, Igor—got to get our train; got to get back up North—got to harden up on trail. Mary! No right to that now. Got to quit it."

Igor turned, reared on his hind feet and pawed at his master's chest. His rough, wet tongue glistened in the moonlight that shone level between the boulders. He did not like McKechnie's tone.

"Got to be done, dog," the miner insisted somberly; "must fix things for him, too, so he can make good."

He caught his breath and looked his dog sternly in the eye: "Got to take her the Christmas posy he grew up there in the sun. Got to tell her—about him."

Igor's nipping, biting caresses answered, his soft ratchet-like whine comforted.

McKechnie suddenly buried his eyes in the dog's neck. He said huskily, "Got to make her happy somehow. Must make it right for Mary."

The Lyric

By Theodosia Garrison

A YOUNGSTER in The Regent's time
One day poured out his heart in rhyme
And slipped the manuscript between
"Ye Sermons of Sylvanus Greene"—
For there I found it,
As walking through grim woods and chill
One comes upon a daffodil
With sunshine round it.
What of the writer? Dust so long,
The heart and hand that made his song
To Kate or Nancy;
Naught but a lyric, faded, dim,
To give a ghostly glimpse of him—
Still, let us fancy
That losing Romance from his state,
He took Ambition for a mate.
At her dictation
Forsook the Muse and traveled far,
Say—studied law, attained the bar,
Gained wealth and station—
In time achieved the wig and gown
And graced the bench in London town,
No judge empiric.
His people never knew, 'tis said,
The reason why he died unwed,
But—here's his lyric:

"O joy, sing joy, I sent my Love a posy,
She took it and she kissed it and she wore it on her breast,
And all the world was happiness and all the clouds were rosy,
And I thought about the Parson who could read the service best.

"O sing sorrow, I sent my Love a posy
With never mark or sign thereon to show the owner's name—
But now I wish had gone with it a billet rhymed or prosy,
For that she gave another thanks who bowed and took the same.

"O woe, sing woe, I sent my Love a posy,
And all the good it might have done another hath possessed,
And now she's walking out with him, contented all and cozy,
And no one knows 'tis my heart that is fading on her breast."

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When You See the Battle-Fields

By William G. Shepherd

Formerly EVERYBODY'S War Correspondent in Europe

PERHAPS you are to be one of the hundreds of thousands of Americans who, now that spring is upon us, will shortly cross the Atlantic to see the battle-fields of France. At least you will be one of the millions of Americans, who, within the next few years, will tramp these fields of death and glory.

For almost a year, now, the European tourists have been treading this sacred ground. The first visitors to the battle-fields, I believe, were the thousands of American men and women who, when the war came to an end, found that their duties in the American army and in the various welfare organizations had ended, and that their trusty automobiles and trusty passes which had once carried them about in actual service could also be used for sight-seeing service. Unlucky and unenterprising was the army officer in Paris or the American Red Cross girl who did not get a chance to scour the French and Belgian battle-fields before taking a ship for home.

The next tourists were the French and Belgian folk who sought the graves of their loved ones and the scenes of their final heroism. Bleak and remote, indeed, is the French grave that is not decorated with the glistening flowers, wreaths and crosses, made of glass beads, which form the customary funeral emblems of the French.

Tourists On the Way

AND then, late last fall, before the rains of winter had set in, there began the traffic of full-fledged touring sightseers to the battle-fields of western Europe. The Belgian and the French folk, who had lived behind the battle lines, went every Sunday, in trains, trams, automobiles, and by bicycle and afoot, to the scenes of devastation. Of a Sunday afternoon, I have seen that sacred hallowed spot which once was Ypres, literally swarming with folk of whom not one had come further than a half-day's journey to see the town that cost a quarter of a million British lives.

And now, with spring and summer before us, with the ocean lanes cleared, we Americans may begin our pilgrimages to the greatest battle-ground of all time.

You, if you expect to go soon, may be wondering about the costs. The first prices in France were high; the early tourists paid well for their enterprise. In Paris you could find companies who, as early as last May, would take you over the battle-fields in great touring-cars, built specially for battle-field travel, and return you to Paris, after a week, for a cost of two hundred dollars, including all expenses of food and shelter. At every stopping-place you found guides who had fought in that particular spot and who could tell you the story of the battle there.

This spring and summer travel to and about the battle-fields will be expensive. Food is high and scarce in the districts of the ruined towns, and the little hotels that have been erected amid the ruins have been put into running order at great expense. But, with the two-hundred-dollar rate which I have given as a *de luxe* charge, it is possible to calculate somewhat on probable expenses. Three hundred dollars as a round-trip ocean fare is the least estimate; this will not insure the best of ocean travel by any means. A hundred dollars a week in Paris for two weeks, and a hundred and fifty a week for two weeks on the battle-fields, is an extremely moderate estimate for conveniences that might not suit a fastidious traveler. This gives a total of eight hundred dollars which, in the judgment of one who has visited all the western battle-fields within the past six months, is the least possible sum that any American who does not want to "rough it" can safely set aside for the trip.

Is this cold-blooded, to figure out in dollars and cents and questions of time and expediency, this matter of visiting battle-fields from which, even at this writing, not all the tools of war have been finally cleared away?

The Ghosts of Visitors to Come

HAVE it as you will. It was figured out for me, not long ago by a colonel of the American army, whose duty it was, when the war came to an end, to clean up the great American battle-field of the Meuse-Argonne.

All day I had been riding about this one battle-field—it covers four hundred and eighty square miles—and all day I had been seeing, as I went along the shell-torn roads,

The trick Château de Montfaucon. Inside, the Germans built a strong tower of cement and steel, supporting two machine-gun emplacements. The top of the tower can be seen through the broken roof. The Kaiser and Crown Prince watched the battles of Verdun from this spot.

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Along this road, over which millions of American tourists will pass, rolled the tanks of war crushing their own wounded. This is a common story about tanks, a neccessary evil.

the ghosts, not only of the twenty-six thousand American boys who laid down their lives in this greatest American battle, but of the millions of Americans, who, in times to come, will whirl through the scenes in their speeding cars, yearning to know the full details of the great untellable story, but finding themselves unable to read in the signs all about them the secrets that such signs will have to tell.

I saw the passing crowds in their speeding cars, dining in the little hotels that will spring up, arriving at the inns at night, after dusty hours of sightseeing, and sinking to sleep on soft beds, after chatting over the events of the day. Was I right, when now and then, out in that unspeakably solitary land, amid the ruined villages and the grave-dotted farms, I sniffed the odor of peanut shells, caught the flashes of pink lemonade, and heard the squeak of the dusty new Sunday shoes of an American circus day? Was I right?

That evening at the château in which resided an engineer who was engaged in clearing up the great battle-field, an American officer spoke of the great crowds of visitors who would, some day, visit these now desolate scenes, and I, in my turn, told of the ghosts of the visitors-to-come who had been haunting my day.

"Well, as for me," said a captain, "I have a wife and a daughter and a young son, and I won't feel that they know America and what it did in the war until they visit this battle-field."

"You're right," said a colonel, who, during his six months of cleaning up had learned every inch of the vast area and every possible iota of the story of that forty-six-day battle. "Nobody will ever be able to write it as it happened. Nobody will ever learn much about it from reading. The only thing to do is to come here and see it. I think every American ought to come here who can get here. It'll make better Americans of them."

And so finally, for want of better things to do, we fell to figuring about how much it would cost to take the trip and how much time it would require.

Outside, in the barracks that surround the château of Chatel-Chehery, we heard the negroes singing a doleful song. When you, gentle visitor, come to this battle-field at last, remember that it was seven thousand American negro soldiers who cleaned up this great field of death, and made it possible to cover it with the green wheat of this spring. Their song which came to us through the cold rain, was one of their "blues." "Blues," as the negroes call them, may be plaintively beautiful, but when you hear them sung in the night rain in a country that is deserted of all humans and ravished by war, by a group of mournful dark men whose daily task is to remove from the fields the bodies of the dead and transport them to a great central cemetery, you are likely to understand why the negro "blues" were originated.

"They sing their blues almost every night," explained the adjutant. "Some nights, I think, they do not sleep at all. And the ghost-stories they tell!"

The Place of Valiance

I'VE set out above the figures we roughly reached. Frankly, now that I have told you how they were worked out, I do not give them as reliable, though they can not be far out of the way. The point is that we thought of them at all. As we sat there on that battle-field that night, so the real fact goes, we were glad enough to think of all the folk of our homeland who would, in happier, cheerier times, come trooping, eager-faced and proud, to this place of valiance, to bend over some compelling grave or to stand on one of the three great heights that dominate the hundreds of miles, and marvel at what American arms accomplished.

A battle-field, with "the captains and the kings" departed, is the epitome of dreariness. If you can imagine yourself in the center of a piece of rolling and somewhat forested land, with every one of the forty villages in the area blown into heaps of stone, deserted as the sands of Texas, with crosses that dot the scene like tufts of sage-brush, you can gain some idea of the emotion which caused the negroes to sing their "blues" o'nights. For miles in every direction out from our château, there were no human beings. Out in the darkness and the rain was nothing but the shell-holes, the splintered trees, the leveled villages, the crosses and crosses and everywhere, the grim mouths, leading down deep into the earth, of the German dugouts.

Yes, it was good to think of the throngs of bright-faced men and women from home who would proudly come to this miserable but glorious place in future days.

The battle-field which you will see this year or next will not have the stories to tell that it had then in those days of clearing up. For one thing, these fields will then be safe for tourists. The task of making them so was not an easy one.

As I rode about the battle-field I saw, here and there, out in the fields, men plodding about in the mud. They were hunting for "duds," which are unexploded shells, and for the deadly hand grenades. Whenever they found one of these objects, they thrust a stick into the ground and attached to it a small slip of white paper. Other crews followed along and moved the shells and grenades, by hand, to central piles. Such a job could not be hit-or-miss work. There were all sorts of shells, shrapnel, high explosives and shells containing deadly gas.

The Ammunition Destroyers

I FOUND that the worries so often expressed at home as to "how in the world the farms of France would ever be made safe again" were being easily solved by these ammunition destroyers. They laid the shells, each according to its kind, on layers, in a sort of funeral pyre. First there would be a layer of high explosive shells. Then, criss-cross over these would be a layer of gas shells. Perhaps a layer of shrapnel would be laid on next. Hand grenades would be poured into the cracks and crannies. When several tons of explosives had thus been gathered and assorted a dynamite charge would be placed underneath the pile, connected with an electric battery.

These expert ammunition destroyers of the American army never stood far enough away from such a pile, when it exploded, to suit a civilian. The idea of having a hundred deadly gas shells burst within the distance of a city block from you is not a comforting one; add to the gas dangers the flying shrapnel and the concussion of the high explosive shells and your civilian

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feels that several good miles ought to separate him from the scene. But the experts know better than this.

A mighty explosion follows the pushing of the electric button. The gas and the high explosive shells go off with one great roar; the shrapnel shells sputter and flash out through the cloud of smoke like fireworks. The gas, as the inexperienced civilian might expect, does not settle down low over the surrounding landscape and kill all the verdure. These experts have learned to so arrange their shells that the gas is blown straight skyward and is dispersed into the atmosphere at a height of several hundred feet. The greater the pile of shells and the greater the explosion the more the gas is spread and rarified, and the less dangerous it becomes. I have seen these ammunition dumps in the Argonne Forest, where thousands of gas shells have been set off by the experts, and not a leaf seems to have suffered from the gas.

I asked the question which any American civilian would have asked: "Why don't you have German prisoners do this work of picking up the shells and exploding them?"

The Americans shrugged their shoulders and said:

"Oh, we want to do it ourselves so that we will know it's done well."

When I asked the question of the French, however, I got a straighter answer:

"We did set the German prisoners to digging out 'duds,'" they said, "but we found out that some of them, when they came across an unexploded shell, buried it just a little deeper in the ground so that a plow would strike it. Some of our farmers were killed by shells that had been hidden this way, and now we do the work of hunting shells. They have been put to work at doing the first plowing."

What Will Become of the Barbed Wire?

NOT all the great mazes of barbed wire will be cleared away from the Meuse-Argonne battle-field by this summer. What to do with this wire is a problem that has not yet been solved. There is one spot on the road which courses the eastern edge of the Argonne Forest where the speeding American tourist can stop his car and stand in the very heart of "no man's land," a "no man's land" that existed for nearly four years, with the French and Germans only a hundred yards apart, until the Americans moved them both in that great Autumn drive of 1918. To the right of you and to the left, as far as the eye can reach, there are mazes of barbed wire. It stretches in a line perhaps a quarter of a mile wide, into the Argonne Forest on one side of you, passing through the swamps and through the running water of the Aire River, and, on the other side, it climbs a wooded height and disappears among the trees.

There seems to be enough of it to dam all the rivers of France, to build into pyramids, to encable the seven seas. It is a plague of the fields, like Canadian thistle or yellow mustard. It lies in rivers and in swamps and in forests, like a deadly growth.

What to do with it is the question. Here and there about the battle-field you might have seen German prisoners working away with small hatchets at heavy chopping-blocks. They were engaged in straightening out barbed wire and cutting it into regulation lengths. Some one has fallen on the scheme of using the barbed wire as reenforcement for concrete in rebuilding bridges and houses, and many carloads of this straightened and cut wire are being taken to building centers for the use of the contractors, if they find it useful.

Up to now no other use has been discovered for it. Tourists will see heaps of it, here and there—throughout France, for years to come. Certainly the tourist who comes to France this year will still find it in place, along the battle-lines in such districts as the Chemin des Dames and the Verdun forts. If you see it strung on wooden posts, you may know that it was erected in 1914, when forest trees were stripped to obtain fence-poles. If it is attached to neat steel posts, you may know that it was erected at a still later period; but if it is strung through the eyes of a twisted steel post and if that post has a cork screw end that may be twisted into the earth in a jiffy, you may know that this is the barbed-wire entanglement of 1918, the latest word in wire obstruction.

Maybe some enterprising American might make a tourists' camp out of this collection of German dugouts.

America's Dead

IF YOU are seeking a certain grave when you come at last to France, you will go to the little village of Romagne, in the heart of the battle-field. The American dead lie there, in a great cemetery on a low sloping hillside, ready for the pilgrimages of their loved ones.

But if you had come to France during last summer on such an errand your search would have been extremely difficult.

On this battle-field, which is as large as four or five American counties, dotted with villages, swamps, forests, hills and creeks, traversed by two rivers and covered with farms, the bodies of twenty-six thousand of our American boys, from every state in the Union, were scattered. As the forty-six-day battle progressed the grave-diggers came along behind the fighting men and did their work in the midst of battle thoroughly and carefully. The well-made, sturdy American cross went up over each grave, and on its face was nailed the identity disk which the soldier wore around his neck and on his wrist.

It has been the task of over four thousand negroes, members of the 805th and 806th Engineers, to collect from the battle-field these bodies and carry them to the Romagne cemetery. It was a task which seemed too sacred to leave to German prisoners. As I saw this work being done, the seriousness with which the negro boys went about their duties, and the thoroughness with which the information about each grave was gathered and set down, I felt that it would be safe to tell the mourning families back in America that everything was being done in France to make it possible for fathers and mothers, some day soon, to stand beside a little plot in Romagne cemetery and know the whole story of what happened to their boy in battle, even as to the spot, however distant it might be, where he fought his last fight, and fell.

By the end of last spring four thousand bodies had been carried to Romagne. Two hundred and fifty bodies a day were brought to the cemetery from distances near by, and one hundred and fifty a day from the more distant parts of the battle-field. When it is realized that many of these precious burdens were carried a distance of over thirty miles to the cemetery, it will be seen that it required constant work for almost a year to complete the labor of veneration and love which Uncle Sam has taken upon himself. The heart-strings of many an American home will be anchored to that hillside outside the quaint and now shattered village of Romagne, where the American dead will rest. To Romagne, through its narrow streets, and by a very short turning between two stumpy little shops to the great cemetery, will pass hundreds of thousands of Americans before the soil of Romagne cemetery becomes all French again.

Graves on the Battle-Ground

AMERICAN crosses were hidden in the wheat-fields of the battle-ground last autumn. The French farmers carefully plowed around each grave. In looking over a huge wheat farm which reminded me of a bit of Iowa acreage, I counted ten crosses rising from the newly turned earth. There were Yank tin hats on four of them—

It would not have been practicable to leave our soldier boys where they fell,

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though the positions of the graves on a battle-field are eloquent of the story of the fighting.

On one side of a road leading to Banthéville, I came across a plot of fourteen American graves. A machine-gun tape had been strung around them on bayonets.

On the other side of the road, in a declivity, I found four German rifles, thrust into the mud, marking German graves. Beside each grave was a machine-gun hole. Here lay four of these maniacal supporters of Kaiserdom—and they were not uncommon in the German machine-gun battalions—who fired their guns to the last and then, if their cry of "Kamerad" did not avail, laid themselves down to die.

Fourteen American graves on one side of the road, bordered with German machine-gun tape; four German graves on the other—no words could have told the story as they did. And I remembered that this four hundred and eighty square miles was so filled with German machine guns that the cleaners-up stopped counting them and shipped them back to Paris by the box-car load.

Such vivid stories as these must, now that our dead are gathered at Romagne, be read by other means than graves, or be told by the battle-field guides, to give American visitors an understanding of the battle-field happenings.

The Remnants of Battle

IT IS the remnants of battle that tell the story of the fighting, and when these remnants are gone, it requires a vivid imagination to people the scene with the ghosts of fighting men.

Not long ago, on Douamont Hill, outside Verdun, an American girl got her first glimpse of a battle-field. This hill had been covered by a beautiful forest before the war; now it was as bleak as a desert. Even the branches and roots had been churned into the earth. The subsoil had been raised to the top by the explosions, and none of the black soil remained in sight. Here was the place of all places on all the battle-fields of Europe to see war's devastation. But it was difficult for the American girl to realize the significance of the sight. She stumbled along with her associates across the shell-torn earth. Twisted rifle-barrels, and all of the débris of battle, including innumerable crosses standing in the mud, made their impression to a certain extent, but I was closely watching to see how much of the terrible story the young lady and her friends were really taking in.

"Look at that!" suddenly exclaimed one of the party.

We turned to see a sturdy shoe standing upright in the mud. "Why, it's all laced!" said the American girl. "The laces are tied with a bow-knot." She was silent a moment, then she said: "Why, it must have been utterly horrible on this hill!"

This shoe, which some chap had carefully laced on his foot one morning and which now stood alone, still laced, told the big story more simply and terribly than all the guides and maps and written tales could ever have related it.

The American who goes to the battle-fields of France this spring—will find few such tokens as this on the fighting-ground. This applies especially to the American fields. The French have been slower in cleaning up their fighting-ground along the Chemin des Dames. Last fall, for instance, I saw much fighting-ground which had not been cleared in any way except for the burial of the dead. Even automobiling was more or less unsafe in this district at that time, as German and French hand-grenades lay about indiscriminately in the road, ready to be set off by the concussion of an automobile tire.

The American tourist, therefore, who comes to France expecting to read the story of the great fighting in objects he sees about him, will be more or less disappointed.

My first advice to such a tourist would be very definite. It is this:

"If you go to the Meuse-Argonne battle-field—which, for size and importance, is *the* American battle-field of the war and of all American history—make it a point to study the battle from books and magazine articles before you leave America. And, by all means, before you depart get hold of some one in your home town who fought on this great field and have him tell you the story of what *your* home-town troops did there, and just exactly where they did it."

You may be sure that some one from your home district fought on that great field. There were 631,405 American boys in that 480 square miles during those forty-six days. Almost half of the Americans killed in the entire war laid themselves down on this field. Twenty-two American divisions were thrown in. They came from New England, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, Ohio, New York, New Jersey, Tennessee, the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Texas, Oklahoma and the Pacific Northwest. Men in these divisions came from every state in the Union. And what is more to the point, units of them came from almost every city in the United States. The tourist who comes to the Argonne from America ought to know just exactly where the troops from his home town did their fighting. This knowledge will enhance a hundredfold his or her interest in the scene.

It is difficult to gain such specific information from the army records in France, where I am writing this article. By this time however, with the most of the boys at home, it is safe to say that every American city has learned from its own men the particular spots on the Meuse-Argonne battle-field which ought to be of interest to that city.

Know What You Want to See

I GIVE this advice to tourists because I have seen a little of the advance guard of tourists, and I remember the whiff of circus-day smells which came to my mental nostrils that wet day last spring. The tourist who comes to France knowing what he wants to see, carrying in his head a more or less adequate idea of the general story of the battle, will not be the man or woman who will look on the trip as merely an exciting excursion. It will be the unknowing and the unprepared ones who will find themselves disappointed by the very vastness of the field and their inability to grasp the story as they move about it.

The uncleared French battle-fields and such unclearable spaces as the ground around Verdun will, for some years, indeed, have something of a story to tell to the thoughtless and the merely curious sensation seekers, but even in those places Nature will have her way before long, as she is having it in the agricultural country where the Americans fought.

Nature's garb of grass and weeds and shrubs is hiding many of the outlines of the fighting-fields even now. Hand-grenades, hidden in grass, have been deadly to not a few peasants. After last spring was well under way it became extremely dangerous to attempt to plow the fields which had not been plowed for four years, because of the shells hidden away in the great growths of yellow mustard and short weeds. Incidentally, the French peasant relied on nature to warn him of one horror that has never been known on the deserted fields of other wars.

Dangers Left Behind

THIS was the danger of poison gas. For many months after the fighting had ended, there was a deadly menace in every pool and every muddy shell-hole in the battle area; the water and the dampness held in solution the terrible burning mustard gas which penetrates the clothing and literally peels away the skin and flesh. The peasant learned that the pool or the water-filled shell-hole that showed no green scum or no sign of plant-life was a death-hole, and he kept his distance from it in his plowing, sowing and reaping.

The disquieting thing about the battle-field trip is that one may come to the scene and depart again feeling that he has grasped too little of its mighty significance. The guides will undoubtedly point out the famous spots: the road through the Argonne Forest along which the 77th fought its way; the spot where Sergeant York took his one hundred and thirty-two prisoners single-handed; the corner of the forest where "The Lost Battalion" held out, and other high-spots of the fighting; but a study of the battle-field will show that every square foot of it has a story of heroism and suffering and bravery which it is dumbly trying to tell to the American visitor.

I am frank to say that my first trip over the Meuse-Argonne battle-field, during which I tried to put myself in the attitude of an American visitor who knew little of war, but had a mighty yearning to know of the valor of his countrymen, I retired, night after night, dissatisfied with my day's experience.

Everything about me had a story to tell; every little roll of ground had afforded a life-and-death problem to thousands of men; every little ditch and hole had meant Fate to some American boy; every inch of the road over which we ran might have told us a tale of mighty hordes of men and the tramp of hundreds of thousands of feet.

How much did these things and others have to tell us? What was there here to be known that we didn't know? How could we open our eyes and our minds to the vast story?

The more time I spent on the battle-field the more I realized that no man can ever grasp all the story in its terms of human interest.

And thus I attempted an experiment.

(*Continued on page 122*)

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The girls from the East were waiting to welcome the return of Tony and his men from the fire on Muleback.

Acheron Run

By Edwin Balmer

Author of "The Indian Drum," "Ruth of the U. S. A.," etc.

If a boy makes a boat for the express purpose of running the rapids, and the girl he loves interferes—there's only one thing for a proud, stubborn boy to do. This one did it—and what came of it five years later in the midst of a forest fire makes just about the best story Edwin Balmer ever wrote. But there will be another "best" one later.

FELICIA SHELBY was standing alone on the rocks before Mt. Mower lookout-station, gazing steadily off to the south to make out the source and character of the smoke rising above the trees on the flank of Muleback Ridge five miles away. The morning, almost windless and sunny, had followed a clear, still night, free both from thunder-showers and from those lightning-storms without rains which are the particular terror of forest officers in the dry season.

The smoke, therefore, arose from a fire lit by hands—in all likelihood by the hands of campers following the trail from Acheron to the Snake River. But campers, even with the best intentions, were apt to be careless, and if from the East, as most campers were, they would underestimate the tinder-like inflammability of the Idaho forest after a season of drought. The time was past when the supervisor and his deputies and the rangers and lookouts of Milliard National Forest credited all fire-lighters with innocence.

This summer dangerous and violent people had seemed dismayingly numerous; so Felicia was keeping very close watch indeed when the telephone jangled in the cabin behind her, and she hastily put down her binoculars and went in.

When the Government took over this end of the forest and chose the summit of Mount Mower for the forest-fire lookout-station, carpenters had first built this tiny cabin at a shop in Acheron twenty-eight miles away; then the forest officers had taken it to pieces and packed it to the foot of Mower; for the last two miles

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they carried it piece by piece on their backs, to reassemble it finally upon this pinnacle, nine thousand three hundred and eighty feet above the sea, a mile higher than its immediate valley and two thousand feet or so loftier than any neighboring summit till Lassiter Mountain, sixteen miles westward, topped it.

FELICIA, upon lifting the telephone receiver, found that the call came from Lassiter, where was a similar Spartan-like station, the nearest in that direction. A young man, Howard Dwyer, was on duty there, as a man should have been on duty at Mower.

Accordingly, Felicia quickly explained: "It's Felix, Howard. Mr. Shirley needed Griggs for the fire over on Kingdom. I'm up for the day."

"Hello there, Felix!" Howard then hailed heartily. "Glad to hear your voice. D' you spot something back of Puma Ridge?"

"Yes, it's on Muleback."

"Reckon you're right; you're nearer. What d' you think about it?"

"I see it pretty plainly. Camp-fire, now."

"All right, if you've spotted it. Say, how're they making out at Kingdom?"

"Cleaned out headquarters and getting more men from Acheron this morning."

"Thought the town already was busy down in the lodge-pole beyond the creek."

"They are. These were men on a train going through."

"Where from? Seattle? A fine bunch, I bet. Start more fire'n they'd put out. Got a gun there, Felix?"

"Yes."

"That's good. By the way, Felix, there's cars on Crandall's road this morning. You can't see 'em yet. Four cars; that's all I can see, but they're by the crossroad and keepin' on. They're sure makin' for the camp. Thought you'd want to know."

Felicia's hand trembled so that she almost lost the last words in the receiver she held to her ear. "Thank you, Howard," she managed, and Dwyer considerately hung up without demanding other conversation.

Felicia stared out unsteadily for a moment before she recollected her duty, returned to the sunlight on the bare rocks and, picking up her glass, dutifully leveled it first on the spire of smoke wafted above Muleback. With a sigh of relief she observed that it had not thickened and then, more hurriedly scanning the southern slopes for trace of other fires, at last she turned away from the government-owned forest to the pine-clad slopes which were the property of Jared Crandall, and searched the endless expanse of blue fir and pine for the gray crack, winding up and down the valley of the Acheron, which was the road to the camp.

The Crandalls meant by a camp a great, log mansion forty by sixty feet, outwardly rough-hewn from yellow Idaho pine and red fir from the lower slopes of Kingdom; the interior also was in wood from their own forests—mostly cedar from the marshes beyond Acheron Lake. It had a great, antlered, double-hearthed room running the whole width of the house, which they called the lounge; it had a monstrous dining-room and kitchen, billiard-room, music-room and den; and beside the dozen or so bedrooms and baths in the main house, there were half a dozen little cottages scattered about near by for the entertainment of guests. For the Crandalls were Eastern people—Jared being of the branch of the family which lived in Stamford, Connecticut; and when they came to the camp, they usually brought a house-party of twenty or thirty friends with them.

When they first arrived in the West—that was ten years ago—they had come quite differently, seeking not diversion, but life itself. For Winthrop, the elder of the two sons, was threatened with tuberculosis; so Mr. and Mrs. Crandall had come alone with Win and his brother Tony, leaving the girls in school in the East. Felicia vividly recalled to herself the first encounter with Tony.

It was April, a sunny, still day, warm even under the trees of the valley, though half-way up the slope of Mower white snow still glistened; Felicia, who was just twelve years old, was on her way home from the little school in Acheron.

SHE had heard that day that the rich Eastern people who had bought the old Crowder place by the river and had been fixing it over, had arrived; so she was going up the river trail to have a distant peek at them when suddenly a boy of about her own age stepped into the path before her.

"Hullo!" he hailed her with belligerent friendliness.

"Hullo!" Felicia returned; and each stopped and looked the other over.

She saw a straight-standing, well-built and reckless-looking boy with brown hair and blue eyes of the sort which seemed to say, "Take a dare?" He had a particularly nice brow, she noticed, when with a reluctant recollection of formal courtesy, he dragged off his cloth cap and stood bare-headed; he had nice, well-shaped hands, which very evidently did many things.

He was better dressed than any other boy she had ever seen; but he was not at all conscious of it, as other well-dressed boys always seemed to be. Indeed, he was not conscious of himself at all, but was all absorbed in her, staring at her coolly from head to foot, and evidently liking her; when he returned to other considerations, it was not of himself but of the bow which he held that he spoke.

"This is a rotten bow!" he showed it to her accusingly. "I thought you had decent Indian bows in the West."

Felicia looked it over with defensive scorn quite equal to his. "Huh! I bet you bought that at a railroad station. No Indian made that. Some Yankee made it to sell to Easterners."

The boy stared hostilely for an instant, and then laughed at himself pleasantly and fairly; he broke the bow over his knee and hurled it away. "What's your name?" he demanded.

"Felicia Shelby. What's yours?"

"Tony Crandall."

"Oh, you're not the sick one, then!"

"No, that's Win," Tony said. "He studied too hard, I think. Wanted to stick around the house all the time. Thought he'd get into Harvard next year. He's fifteen."

"How old 'r' you?"

"Fourteen in seven months."

"Weren't you in school?"

"Sure I was in school—on the second nine and the hockey team, I tell you. They wouldn't 've got me to leave, but I wouldn't throw down Win. He's got to stay here all the time for five years, maybe, they say. I'll stay with him—outdoors mostly. Father's got a tutor for us—don't care much for that. But I like it here—" he looked about at the woods, breathing deep with his pleasure. "What d' you call that river?" he asked, looking down estimatingly at the torrent below them.

"The Acheron."

"What?" And when Felicia repeated, he commented—"Funny name. How'd it get it?"

"It means," said Felicia, "River of Grief."

"Oh, now I get you! Thought I'd heard it somewhere. Greek history stuff, Pluto and all that. What'd they call it that for?"

"You ought to see it five miles below here."

"Faster than this?"

"Faster? I should just say! No one dares try to go down it."

"Bet I would!"

"Bet you wouldn't!"

"Bet I will! Where d' you live?"

"Over there," Felicia pointed into the forest to the right.

"Got any brothers?"

"No."

"What have you got?"

"Just my father."

"What's he out here?"

"Just Mr. Shelby," Felicia explained. "He's sick, but getting well."

"That's good. That your land that way?"

"No; we haven't got any land. We came two years ago from Chicago. That's government land, anyway; that's national forest. Father's working there now; he's forest clerk for Mr. Shirley."

Felicia found no different expression in the rich boy's eyes after this confession of her humble station. "Can you ride?" he demanded.

"Of course; but I've no pony of my own."

"We've two. I'll take Win's horse—he won't ride yet; you take mine. Will you show me that fast river to-morrow?"

THUS the next day she rode with her new friend down beside the torrent of the Acheron, and she showed him the deadly run—the mile and more of hurtling, tossing, sucking cascade and whirlpool which had destroyed every one caught in the swift current above and swept down to the gorge. Felicia saw Tony's eyes light and sparkle at the sight.

"Some river you have got here!" he admitted ungrudgingly. "But I bet a good man with the right boat can go down. I bet I will—some day!"

Felicia's impulse was to defy him, but her instinct forbade the taunt. She was beginning to understand that this nice boy very likely might try it; not then, but "some day." So she said, half frightened, "Let's look at the mountain road."

There were climbs of all sorts there to allure him, some safe enough, others dangerous; but at worst, less deadly than the river. He made most of those climbs in the next few years, either with Felicia or with boys from Acheron Lake, and in the

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Tony was returning, swinging back and forth, feeling his way through the smoke.

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winter skated and played hockey with them. But always Felicia, though a girl—or was it because of that?—was his especial confidant.

Mrs. Crandall often invited her to the house on snow-bound days to help interest Win, who was not gaining strength as rapidly as he should; so they'd play authors and checkers. Then, while Win slept, Tony and Felicia would read Henty, and "Treasure Island," and "Huck Finn," or Tony would "imagine" things with her, and tell her hopes and ambitions of his own which he would not have dreamed of telling any one else.

Tony went East every now and then with his father or with his mother, who journeyed back and forth often, but Win always remained; so Tony soon returned, and their father purchased additional tracts of the wide woodland and ordered the building of the camp for a home for all the family from June to October. And the girls, Barbara and Charlotte, came also and brought their friends from the East.

Felicia, after a few encounters with these guests, learned to keep away from camp, so Tony would hunt her up.

"See here, Felix," he demanded, "why didn't you come to Charlotte's birthday party yesterday?"

Felicia tried to make evasions, but her eyes filled in spite of herself, and Tony seized her arm. "Who hurt you, Felicia? Charlotte? Barbara? I guess I'll fix them! Now you look here, any place that's good enough for me 's good enough for you."

Which was not at all what he meant; but Felicia knew what he meant and why Mrs. Crandall did not ask her to the house. She was seventeen and Tony eighteen and a half—almost a young man, and she was rounding into young womanhood. Gone was her straight, lithe, boyish figure; gone her straight doubled braids of dark hair; gone her child's bold gaze and quick, thoughtless speech; gone, indeed, was the little girl; and in her place had come a maiden who surprised herself with awareness of her sex, who at first opposed such consciousness, but had to submit at last.

SO, WITH her money earned by working in the supervisor's office, she bought by mail, pretty feminine blouses; she learned to "do up" her hair, which became beautiful and lustrous without need of Charlotte's hundred nightly brushings; her blue eyes seemed to deepen a little in hue and to soften, though they looked at one as directly and frankly as ever, and her voice softened. She grew, but did not become really tall; she was rather a little person; and men who used to hold her before them on their horses when she was a child, dismounted when they met her and awkwardly pulled off their hats and delayed her in talk.

"No girl at the camp can touch you," they said to her, proud of her as one of themselves. Felicia said nothing aloud, but to herself admitted, "No girl at the camp wants to."

And Tony, when he came for her to ride with him, began formally to seek her handclasp and to require it again at evening before they parted. She found him flushing, as she found warm blood flowing within her when, on their climbs, he lifted her in his arms from one foothold to another which she could not quite reach. He took in his pocket to read to her on the mountain-tops the "Rubaiyat," and "The Seven Seas," and "The Five Nations."

This was all delight until, when he took her home and they passed Acheron Run, she saw him look down defiantly at that torrent which had always fascinated him.

"I bet a man can go down the run," he said. And now, more than ever before, the thought that he might try it excited her.

"Don't you ever try it!"

"Why not? What do you care?"

Which reply made her so angry that she cried when she was alone at last.

HE WAS at Harvard now in the autumn, winter and spring; one summer he went abroad, but the next he returned to the camp; he was in higher spirits, more daring than ever, and now, when he looked upon the run, he talked about it no more, but she saw his eye gleam in his estimation of it. So all that first month she mightily feared, and one day, when she was afraid to delay longer, she invaded the domains of the Crandalls.

She followed a new path down the river to a well-hidden ravine, where she discovered a shed within which Tony was working at a boat which he had evidently built there—a cedar kaiak, sealed over bow and stern, with a cockpit amidship to hold one man. The craft was complete, and its purpose so plain that Felicia went white, and trembled as she advanced.

He heard her and turning, he attempted to hail her as usual, but he started guiltily when he saw her paleness.

"Tony, when were you going to do it?" she asked.

"I was going to do it to-morrow morning, but I'm ready now!" he replied, recovering himself to defy her.

"Tony, you'll kill yourself. I'll not let you," her voice said quite calmly; while passions, which she did not dream she possessed, rose within her.

"I can make the run all right! If I don't, what do you care?"

This maddened her, so that she bent and snatched up an adz and raised it, when he sprang upon her.

"You smash my boat and I'll go down the run on a log, do you hear?" and his breath was hot upon her face as she struggled. She dropped the adz and fought him only a moment more; for she believed him. He released her then and she backed away from him. She could have killed herself when she realized the mistake she had made. For if he had possibly hesitated before, now he would go down the run on a log, as he said; he would kill himself!

Words of hers, arguments, appeals, would mean nothing. She did not try them. Subconsciously her senses worked for her. She saw overhead a block and tackle rigged to the roof of the shed to lift the boat while he worked, and without being aware of what her mind was doing, she planned to use it.

A bit of loose line lay on the boat, and only waiting until Tony ceased to confront her, and until he had turned to continue his work on the boat, she snatched up the rope, sprang forward and looped it about his wrists; she caught the loop in the hook of the pulley and, springing to the tackle before he could free himself, she put all her weight on the rope and, with her strength trebled by the blocks, she raised his arms above his head.

He saw her stratagem now and he shouted a threat at her, but she pulled harder on the tackle and had him helpless.

"Am I hurting you—hurting you, Tony?" she besought.

"No—damn you, no! Let me go!"

"Not till you promise never to go into the run."

"Let me go, you little devil!"

"Do you promise?"

"No."

"Oh, Tony—Tony, then I'll have to hold you here till you do."

"I'll not!"

"You'll have to——"

So for an hour, and then for another, they defied each other. Many times she almost broke down, but she knew that she had to go through with it now; yet she thought he would faint and she would collapse first. Then fortune helped her. She heard a party of guests from the camp passing on a trail above the ravine and she threatened to call them down to see him; so, furiously, he gave in.

He left her at the door of the shed, refusing to let her start home with him, and she never spoke to him or saw him again after that, for the Summer was 1914. Within the week, the war was on; in September he was driving an ambulance in France; in 1915 he was training at Pau for flight; the next year he was in combat over Verdun; then America came in; he was with his own army. All these things Felicia found out from others; in five years she received no word from him.

BUT now she knew he had been again at home in Stamford; this morning motor-cars, four in number, were on Crandall's road, passed the crossroads, and were making for camp.

She could see a speck crawling up the gray crack through the pine six miles away; a motor-car. Another followed it—two more—but the first was far ahead. They all dropped out of sight; appeared again with the first one leading by a greater gap. Tony! Was he in that party and driving that first car? Once more, after a climb, they dropped out of sight, and before them the road was lost from her sight all the way to the camp.

Felicia turned tremblingly, and leveled her glass again at the smoke over Muleback—spreading smoke, and leaping upward into flame. She could see the red and the flash as the crown of a tree caught. Swiftly she sprang into the cabin and called headquarters.

"Fire on Muleback—88-36," she designated it by the forester's numbered divisions.

Julia Shirley at the forest supervisor's headquarters acknowledged the call and repeated it formally.

"There's no one here to go, Felicia," she said. "They're all at Kingdom; it's jumping over there."

"I just saw," said Felicia, "some people going to the camp."

"Did you? Then I'll call them. Thanks."

"Would you mind," asked Felicia, "plugging this line through so I can talk to them and know at once if—anybody's there?" And she heard on her line the ringing signal calling Crandall's.

"Hello! Hello!" a man's voice said, and Felicia shut her eyes and fought for calm breath.

"This is Mount Mower lookout!" she

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said at last. "There's a fire broken out on Muleback—88-36, and all our people are working on Kingdom. Can you go?"

"Yes," the voice said with queer suddenness, and then halted. "Of course." Then, "Who are you?"

"How many men can go?" asked Felicia.

"Eight; I'll take 'em. *Who are you?*"

"Felicia Shelby."

"*I thought so.*"

"You're?"

"Tony Crandall. Seven men with me; we start at once. Muleback—88-36. That right?"

"That's right. Good-by."

"Good-by."

Felicia stepped out into the sun with her glass again to her eyes as she watched the spreading fire on Muleback.

He had returned to her again, and she had heard his voice and had spoken to him! It had seemed to Felicia, during those terrible, endless years of the war when he had been throughout in the thick of it—particularly during that frightful month when her New York newspaper (which she took because it told most about such men as he) reported that he had been seriously wounded—it had seemed that knowledge that he was no longer to be in danger would be happiness complete. But for many months he had been "home"; and she, though joyous at that knowledge, yet was not happy. She was joyous, exultant, this morning, but not happy.

Though she repeated to herself again and again just what he had said to her, and tried to recollect exactly his tone when he had hailed her, still she reckoned, against her exultation, the guests who had come in those cars. Four cars, she had counted; and he had said there were eight men. Even supposing that they had brought a few extra servants to reenforce the people always at the camp, yet many of that party must have been guests beside the seven who were men. So he had returned. But to her?

Beyond the fire, straight in the sweep of the wind, lay dry pine, into which Tony had fallen.

SHE watched the fire on Muleback, witnessing it spread and flare and spread again under its smoke until slowly something seemed to choke it. She could not see at such distance and under the smoke, but she knew what was happening. Tony and his men had cut a fire line before it, back-fired and beaten it. At sunset it was only a charred, smoldering patch; and over on Kingdom, though the fire was not yet out, still the rangers had stopped calling for more men, and in the lodge-pole, too, the flames diminished.

Yet no one came at night to relieve Felicia. Julia Shirley telephoned that the men on Kingdom who had fought the fire all day were still at work, or sleeping exhausted where they dropped; Julia was remaining at the switchboard at headquarters. That morning Felicia had expected, merely as a matter of course, to stay on duty thirty or forty hours, if needed; but she had not expected, then, to see at night the far-away glow of the lounging-room windows in the camp, and to know the girls from the East were waiting there to welcome the return of Tony and his men from the fire on Muleback.

She tried not to look too many times toward those bright windows; night offered the best opportunities to those who, as yet undiscovered, set fire to the forest; every minute gained in sighting the first flare of a blaze meant many acres saved, perhaps. Felicia put on her jacket, for it was bitter on the summit of Mower, and paced in the starlight over the cold rocks.

"When the golden sun sinks in the hills,
And the toil of the long day is o'er—"

she sang to herself while she peered about in the darkness.

"Far away where the blue shadows fall,"

she continued the verse of the last song he had brought West and sung to her just before the war. It recalled memories almost unbearable with those lounging-room windows so bright; but she sang melancholily the verse to the end.

"There are hands that will welcome me
in——"

Did she hear a sound as of some one climbing up from below? No, of course not; it was only a rock slipping as the night cold cracked it off; a mountain is always falling to pieces.

"And a thousand things other men miss——!"

She started—that was no echo of her own voice! She had not yet reached that line of the song; besides, a man had sung it. Did she imagine—Tony's voice?

"Hello, Felicia!"

"Tony?"

"Who'd you suppose?"

"Tony!"

"Say, who changed this path?"

"Tony, be careful; it turns right, not left, after the boulder!"

"So I've just found out!"

"Oh, you're hurt!" Her momentary paralysis of joy was over, and she was rushing down to him in the dark.

"Hurt! Think I've forgotten how to tumble ten feet?"

His voice was fuller, more mature; a man's voice, yet so surely Tony's; he was bigger, firmer as she felt him with her hands, but he was Tony; hardly a stranger at all! He laughed in the same old way; his hands caught hers and held hard in the moment of meeting, just as they used to do.

"Hello, Felix; you're just the same size!"

"Inch and a quarter taller, Tony!"

"All of that? Then you're not any heavier."

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"Hundred and seven now."

"That's five pounds put on!" So he remembered her old weight five years ago! "I bet it's becoming. Where's your light, Felix? I want to see you."

SHE did not answer that demand except by leading him, still clasping his hand, up toward the cabin. Her heart was pounding shamelessly with pulse so wild that she felt it in her palm, and he must feel it too; she could feel his. But he had the excuse of a mile's climb.

"Tony, what brought you up here tonight?"

"Why, Shirley asked for volunteers, Felix, and we all drew lots for it; and I got stuck. I tried to get out of it particularly hard when I heard it was you I had to relieve," he taunted her, but could not keep it up when they stepped into the cabin. "Where's your light?"

She unclasped her hand to strike a match; her intention when she scratched it was to light the wick of the cabin lamp, but when the tiny flame was in her fingers, she got a glimpse of him and forgot the lamp and held the flare toward him. So, for an instant, she saw him—saw his eyes intent upon her: saw his lips press tight before he smiled and thrust the light back so he could see her better. He struck the next match and lit the lamp.

"Tony, why didn't you send me word—one word in five years?" she cried; and the next instant she could have bitten out her tongue for saying it. This was the one thing which, during those five years, she had determined never to say.

"How many times did you write me, Felix?" he demanded quietly.

"Eight times."

"I got all but one, then."

"You did?"

"And wrote you each time in reply."

"I never got one!"

"You wouldn't. They never started to you; they weren't to go unless I went West. If I had, you'd have heard, Felix."

"Oh!" she gasped for breath. "I'd have heard what, Tony?"

He shook his head. "What's the odds now? I came here so you could go to sleep. You're tired, Felix."

"You are, too." She traced consciously the lines of soil and sweat on the corduroys he was wearing. "You must have worked awfully hard over on Muleback to get that out."

"Some one set that fire, Felix."

"Yes, people seem to be setting fires this year."

"All right; I'll watch for 'em now. You go to sleep!" he commanded peremptorily and pointed her to bed; he picked up her glass and, turning his back he went out to the rocks.

Felicia blew out the light which, instead of disclosing him, now blinded her against the sight of his figure in the starlight. She lay down upon the bed and pulled a blanket over her, but her head was so propped by the pillow that she could watch him out of the low window. She had no thought whatever of sleep. He had come to her—her—her this night, leaving them all who were there beside those bright lights down in the valley!

So he had written her—each time he received her letters; but his were to be sent only if he died. What did that mean? What did he mean now by coming to her this night? That he had forgiven her?

She saw him move from the edge of the rocks nearer to the cabin and stand, listening; then, very softly he whispered, "Felix?"

"Oh, I'm awake; what is it?"

"I could have made the run!"

"You couldn't!"

He turned away without further word; and she lay miserable, so wretched that whereas the moment before sleep seemed forever impossible, now exhaustion mercifully stupefied her and she slept.

The clear, bright shafts of the eastern sun were above her when she awoke with a start. A breeze was blowing, and there was a hand upon her shoulder, a familiar, thrilling grasp. Tony's. How did he get there? Oh, yes; he was back! She remembered.

"Sorry, Felix!" he apologized to her, as she sat up. "Shirley wants me *pronto*. They've just lit up Puma. I've been thinking, last night standing out there, Felix, how to get those birds!" He stared vengefully at the new flame leaping up the side of the tinder-dry distant ridge. "Airplane's the way; get you over this forest in ten minutes. I'll wire for a 'ship' this morning. Get it here in express car! Good-by, Felix!" And so, in the next moment, he was gone.

FOR five days thenceforward she never saw him close enough to distinguish his form in the ranks of the specks which passed by Mower, now to the east, now west, now north or south as men shifted back and forth from the fires. All during the week Felicia remained at the summit of Mower, sharing the cabin with Julia Shirley, who, relieved of switchboard duty, had arrived to stand alternate watches day and night; for the forest fires now were blazing ceaselessly, and every man who could be mustered was kept at work until he dropped.

Dwyer long ago had gone from Lassiter, leaving two women in his place; girls stood sentinel upon Mt. Kenton and on Blackbear Butte, and a girl's voice telephoned in from Salishan Peak the alarm which first warned of the outbreak of the blaze on Kalispel. This was down the river, in thick jungle-like lodge-pole pine, dry as kindling, and so situated in the valley that the southwest wind which was blowing fanned the flames as in a furnace, with the gap between Salishan and Kalispel for a flue.

This fire was as near to the Mower as to the Salishan lookout, but so thick about Mower was the smoke from fires further south that Felicia could not certainly locate the position of the new blaze even after it was reported; so thick, indeed, was the smoke, that when an airplane passed by in distinct hearing, Felicia got not a glimpse of it.

"It passed half a mile north, I think," she estimated in reporting it. "Went out of hearing to the west."

"Lieutenant Crandall has volunteered to fly for us," forest headquarters informed the lookouts then, restoring Tony's military rank for the occasion. "He hopes to catch and cut off any one setting fires; he has wireless-telephone equipment by which he will report at once location of any new blaze. To assist him and identify your post, you will spread strips as follows." And headquarters detailed the distinguishing marks for each station.

Felicia and Julia spread on Mower summit their "strips," composed of blankets and bedding arranged in a big V and weighted down with stones.

The best prismatic binoculars no longer offered any useful service. Pungent, yellow haze rolled up over Mower, eddied and streamed before the sharp round disk of the rust-red sun, and flowed into the valley, dimming and obscuring. And upon the smoke rode silence; ordinarily with such a wind, the rustle of the dry pine branches down on the flanks of Mower would have been plainly audible; frequently, too, the far-away roar of the cascades of the run reached to the mountain-top; but to-day the smoke seemed to smother all usual sound—or was it Felicia's ears which shut out all but the distant thrash of airscrew and the drone of motor explosions?

Tony had passed in the direction of Kalispel, and long after she could argue to herself that she yet heard the sound of his engine, Felicia sat gazing to the northeast and straining to hear. He had passed over the fire, she was sure; now was he on his way back? Or did her fancy supply that hum? At any rate, it was gone again; he had returned over the burning area.

Dangerous duty he had undertaken, but invaluable, she knew, if he did no more than discover and report the progress and limits of the fires; for the other lookout stations already were, or soon would become, as useless as Mower; but Tony, flying freely everywhere, instantly could call men to flames which could still be controlled, and prevent the dispatch of the forest forces to districts which no human power could save. But the peril to him was great.

WHEN Tony was away at war, Felicia had learned enough about flying to understand that such a pilot as he had little to fear, even though his engine failed, if he were flying about aviation fields or over ground where a man might make a forced landing with success.

But the forest and mountains offered no one such landing-place within many, many miles. Indeed, Felicia tried vainly to think of more than one suitable place; besides the leveled green of the camp's tennis-courts, from which Tony undoubtedly had "hopped off," she could think of only the streets of Acheron and small rough patches here and there where only a desperate pilot would land. There was direct danger to him, accordingly, if he were lost in the smoke and could not return to the camp. Forest headquarters realized this when it ordered the mountain-tops marked to guide him.

A droning, undeniable, rose out of the north, and Felicia stood up. It diminished, increased, lessened again. Tony was returning, but he was swinging back and forth, "feeling" his way through the smoke. The droning ran with staccato interruption; a cylinder or so of the engine was missing, but he veered closer. Felicia stifled her will to shout; he seemed now to make out the mighty bulk of the mountain and steer directly for the summit.

She could see the doubled line of wings appearing, now the whirring of the propeller, and behind it, Tony bent. He circled low and close, not merely to make certain of the distinguishing mark of the

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Smoke shut the rapids from her sight; the frightful crackle and roar of the blazing pine dulled the tumult of the waters.

mountain. He could have seen the V with its point to the south, from much higher up; he seemed to wish to make certain of her, at least he waved an arm.

Did he see her and know her from Julia? She raised her arm to him, not thinking, then she turned and pointed to the camp. "That way; east; that way, Tony!" she cried, and she shook in impatience to make him go away, for, with his engine throttled down, the halt of the motor was dismayingly plain.

He waved once more and was off, flying up-wind now so that she heard him long after he disappeared, and when the last sound was gone, she went to her telephone and reported: "Mr. Crandall passed here, and went on in the direction of the camp."

"Yes," said headquarters. "He has just landed there. Keep your strips displayed; he will fly again as soon as he has got gas."

HALF an hour later, motor explosions drummed down the wind. "He's fixed that miss," Felicia said; but before he was beyond hearing, "There's that cylinder gone out again, but he's keeping on. He would." And she sat on the rocks again, helplessly listening. Now the wind from the southwest was stronger; he remained far down the wind and she could hear nothing at all; she could see barely a few hundred yards, for the smoke from the fires to the south had doubled in density; and north and east, by Kalispel, the fire was far beyond control.

"It's burning on a five-mile front with a depth of about two miles now, Mr. Crandall reports." So said headquarters when Felicia took up her telephone again. "Everything's going—ground, brush and crown."

"Where's Mr. Crandall?" Felicia demanded.

"Oh, he's all right; we talk to him every few minutes."

Felicia hung up. "I'm not doing anything here, Julia," she announced to her companion. "I'm going down to headquarters."

Several times during the hour it took her to scramble down the mountain path she wished she had not started, for at the telephone on the summit she at least was in touch with knowable events, but during the hour nothing happened except the spread of the fire.

At the supervisor's office she found a ranger who had been burned so as to be temporarily laid up, sitting beside a metal box with wires going to receivers clamped to his ears and to a transmitter before his lips; and she knew it was the wireless telephone, and that when he spoke it was to Tony, and when he listened it was to Tony's voice.

Perhaps the ranger actually was weary, more probably he saw the yearning in Felicia's eyes. "Want to take a trick? It's just like any other telephoning."

Felicia put on the harness. "West of Salishan," said Tony's voice presently, "the wind backs from the mountain, and a few men might cut a line which would save the stand of fir to the west. Further north it's no use; it's jumped both 'breaks,'" and his voice went on: "Did you get all that?"

"Yes," said Felicia. "West of Salishan—" and she repeated.

"All right. Hello, Felix!" said Tony's voice.

"Hello, Tony. How's the engine?"

"All right; why?"

"I heard it missing when you passed."

"I'm all right, I tell you. Give that back to Henderson, Felix. I'm working."

"Tony, take care of yourself!"

Then she obeyed him; but all the same she remained very close to the metal box.

For half an hour more Henderson took reports and directions which Felicia helped to record. Then the reports ceased.

"Hello!" called Henderson. "Hello, Crandall! Hello! Hello!"

"Let me try!" Felicia begged; and so she tried and tried until Henderson mercifully stopped her.

"His phone's out of order, that's all, Felicia! It's a new-fangled contraption."

FELICIA looked up, calm but very pale.

"He's down," she said.

"Salishan reports," announced the girl at the forest-line switchboard, "that up to ten minutes ago they heard faintly the noise of Mr. Crandall's engine, which was not running very regularly. About ten minutes ago it suddenly ceased; they have not heard it since."

Felicia went back to the forest map. "He made his last report from right off the river. He's down there; down!" And she went out of the office into the smoky air. Between her and Tony lay probably eight miles of forest, five of it safe and unkindled, protected by fire-breaks and the wind; then lay a great band all burning—ground, brush and timber—and beyond this, straight in the sweep of the wind, lay dry lodge-pole pine, into which Tony must have fallen.

Perhaps already he was dead; but though terror of that flashed over her, yet her mind told her it was not most likely. A pilot such as he, even though falling into forest, would be able to save himself somewhat. Possibly—just within the range of chance—he had saved himself whole and free; but that was even more unlikely. What she knew to be most sure was, that falling in his "ship," he was living but injured; how badly it was useless to

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wonder. In any case, he was before the forest fire.

A view from a war-time photograph visioned before her: it showed a pilot who had fallen in a forest, with limbs broken and helpless under the wreck of his plane. She saw Tony, with the leaping, gale-blown blaze of the timber fire licking toward him, helpless, unable to move.

A man on horseback—Henderson, now disregarding his hurts—galloped by. "I'll tell the boys!" he shouted to her. He meant the men in the parties following the fire and trying to beat it back upon its nearer edges—men all on this side of that tremendous two-mile-deep mountain furnace.

Felicia knew what they would try to do—the only thing they could attempt; that was to work around the fire five miles out and five miles back up and down rough mountain trail around Salishan; miles that would take—hours!

She ran to the corral and caught a horse, galloped to the bridge over the Acheron, crossed and rode through the camp. She saw girls gathered on the porch—girls in light, cool Summer things, trying to stare through the smoky sky. Alarm evidently had spread to them.

Felicia pulled up only long enough to cry to a servant to fetch her an ax. She took it, and cried her horse on down the river road. For five miles it was clear—the five miles to the top of the run; then the burning band began—blazing ground, blazing bush and flaming trees—four miles away to the right and nearly as far to the left, all consuming, impassable save for the gorge of the river dividing it and through which dashed the whirling, leaping cascade of the run. Far-away mountain snow, still melting in the summer sun, fed the River of Grief even through drought, and fed it deadly full.

FELICIA was riding now with the river beside her, with the roar of the nearing run loud in her ears; but above the noise of the waters rose the blazing, bellowing fury of the forest flames. She could feel the heat in the smoke through which she galloped; gases, evil and stifling, eddied upwind, and the pall of smoke thickened and blinded her, blinded and frightened her horse, so that he reared and turned when she urged him on, so she leaped down, and let him run away on the river road.

Ax in hand and head down against the heat and smoke, with her aching eyes streaming tears, she reached the top of the ravine where Tony had built his boat. She found the shed under the trees at the water's edge, found the door still latched and padlocked, just as he had left it five years before; she raised her ax and smashed in the door.

There lay his boat; dry in seams, she knew, but air-tanks of tin were in bow and stern. She knew that, though the boat filled, these would keep it afloat. From the hook in the roof of the shed hung the block and tackle by which she had strung Tony up. She lowered it and passed a line under the hull, which she raised and thrust put over the water. She snatched up the paddle, launched his boat and leaped in, pushing out from the edge to the full catch of the swift suck toward the cascades.

Smoke shut the rapids from her sight; the frightful crackle and roar of the blazing pine dulled the tumult of the waters; she drifted and swirled, spinning dizzily; heat assailed her, now on one side, now on the other; there ceased to be respite from the heat, though still she spun and turned. The flames no longer were only ahead; they were on both sides, behind her; water filled the boat up to her waist; but she thrust herself further into it, curling down in the cockpit till the water covered her to her throat. In this position she could not possibly use her paddle, yet she clung to it. The boat spun on, sodden, sunken almost to the water's level, only the air in the metal tanks keeping it afloat.

Flame-darting red fire, not merely heat, flashed at Felicia; she saw the flare through her closed eyes and she shrank down further, with her head under the water.

SOME sudden power tore the paddle from her hand; some tremendous violence drew her and the boat down, drew her under, and turned the boat above her; it released her suddenly for a catch of half a breath; it gurgled into her mouth with the hot gasp of gaseous air, a tremendous blow battered it out of her and she sucked in against all her will.

Water choked her; but now air—hot, burning fumes, but air! air! The water leaped by her; its crash and suck became again audible as something outside of herself, like the bellow of the forest fire. The boat had grounded upon a rock on the edge of an eddy of the run.

She lifted her head and instantly shrank down to the water; a rill of air, bearable to the throat, followed the current; above it, were yellow fumes, through which the ground glared; the bush glared and the crowns of the blazing pines crashed conflagration onward.

She thrust her hand against a rock to push the boat again into the river, and the heat of the stone seared her palm and fingers, but the water whirled the boat out and carried her on.

As she crouched under, she began to believe, for the first time, that she would survive the run. God was guiding her, she thought; God, the giver of Destiny, had prepared it all long ago. She felt understanding, at last, of that wild, seemingly senseless fascination of self-destruction in the run which had seized Tony when a boy.

God had foreseen this day, and so had prepared rescue for him. The idea gave her comfort and confidence, not only that she would get through, but that she would find Tony alive—then the cascade drew her under, overturned her, sucked down, down; released and spewed her up to half gasp for breath and catch her with lungs empty and draw her down; batter her; bruise her —— something drummed, drummed in her head. Not the forest; not the river; her own pulses were shutting them out; her head seemed bursting.

"He couldn't have made it," the thought spread through the drumming. "He'd have killed himself; I'm glad I stopped him——"

The river bore her unseeing, unhearing, through the burning furnace of the pine forest; on past the edge where the ground fire at last ceased and only the brush and the timber blazed; on past the edge where the brush had not yet caught and only the pine-crowns flamed; on, at last, past the leaping, roaring line where the blaze jumped from pine-crown to pine-crown yet unconsumed and before which blew the gases and the smoke.

These in themselves threatened death; and Tony, breathing them, well knew the danger. The fire itself was yet more than a mile away, though its heat made such calm estimate incredible.

He was beside the river, lying on the rocks with his face over the water; his head was cut and still bleeding a little; his right arm was "dud"; but only a strain, he thought. His right leg plainly was broken between the knee and thigh, and dragging himself over the quarter-mile of forest from the point where he had fallen, had not eased the pain.

He really had no idea that he could succeed in standing, one-legged, in the water when the flames came closer, but that offered his only chance. This was below the run, but the current was more than swift enough to sweep him down; of course he could try to swim, one-armed and one-legged.

HE LOOKED about in the small circle where the smoke let him see, and hoped for a log, but there was none. He lowered his head to breathe, he looked up again. Any minute the stream might bring a log or something. But it didn't. That fire! Hear it! Feel it! Hotter; hotter!

"Some fire!" Tony said to himself. "Some fire, Felicia."

It was his way, when talking to himself, to put in her name like that. He had learned that trick when away at war.

Hello! Something was coming down the river! By God, a boat! His boat, and some one in it! Felix!

"Felix!" he yelled. He tried to stand up, forgetting all about that "dud" leg. "Felix! Oh, Felix!"

Was she dead? Drowned? Oh, Felix! No; she had life in her; but she'd fainted. His boat brought her through, righting in calm water as he had built it to do. "Felix;" he saw her jerk and straighten up; she saw him; she called. She tried to paddle the boat with her hands; the current swept her by; but twenty yards below, at a bend, she leaped out and found footing and dragged the boat aground.

Then she had her arms about him; displaying marvelous strength while she helped drag him, but crying hysterically all the while till she got him in his boat and crowded in by him, and they let the smooth, swift current carry them down—down to safety.

"Do you care," said Tony, when they had passed far enough from the fumes to speak, "to know what I said in those seven letters? Seven ways of saying one thing, Felix. I love you; I always loved you!"

"Oh, Tony!"

"If I didn't come back, I wanted you to know."

"Why not, Tony, if you did?"

"If I did," said Tony, "I meant to make the run first and then ask you to marry me. Of course, now I don't care. Yet—" he looked in her eyes and smiled in his old way—"Wasn't I right? You came down the run."

"Yes, you were right, Tony."

"But if I'd been there, I'd never have let you."

"If you'd been there, I'd not have tried."

"Anyway, why did you do it? Oh, Felix, my Felix, I love you!"

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Prose or Worse

Collected by

Gridley Adams

(Harrisburg, Illinois, Chronicle)

C. R. OVERLY, proprietor of the Commercial Hotel, was arrested last night on a charge of beating his wife.

For Sale—Commercial Hotel, doing good business. Selling on account of wife's bad health.

A regular hotel beat.

(Birmingham Age-Herald)

Beautifully educated (her linguistic accomplishments being wonderful) with all the sweetness and graciousness of the Southern woman, and the exotic charm of the foreigner, Mrs. Davis is an unusual combination of beauty and culture and her vivid, enthusiastic manner and her keen sense of humor dominant at every turn, surprises her auditor and reveals her as a delicious bit of feminine originality and exquisite charm, of both mental and physical pulchritude.

Among other things——

(Quincy Whig)

Notice—I will not be responsible for any debts contracted by my wife (Mrs. Nellie Hedges) on or after this date.

(Signed) W. B. HEDGES.

Notice—Mrs. Nellie Hedges doesn't understand an advertisement appearing in the Sunday *Whig*—Mr. Hedges does not now and never has paid any of Mrs. Hedges' bills.

Somebody will have to hedge, all right, all right.

(Maumee, Ohio, Advance-Era)

From the time that the great satin finished copper sun sheds its dawning mellow effulgence over slumbering Perrysburg, filtering its golden rays through a dreamy azure haze, until it sinks into chromatic glory behind battle scarred Presque Isle Hill, leaving its iridescent trail to be followed by the aluminum plated queen of night, it is one prolonged inhalation of inexpressible ecstasy. And nowhere else but on the classic and historic garden spotted, and kine trampled banklets of the gentle and seductive Maumee is life so full of ripe contentment and soul soothing glory.

Giddap!

(Chicago Tribune)

Two boatloads will arrive by water.

Simply wonderful what has come out of the war.

(Received by a Chicago painter)

Dear Sir: I am a young man and am anxious to be an artist and paint a picture. I have procured the brush and the paints. Please tell me, should I name it first and then paint it, or should I paint it, and name it later?

Oh, go ahead and paint it, some one will name it all right.

(Milwaukee Sentinel)

Eau Claire—James Lowden, 60 years old, an old pioneer resident of this city, dropped dead in a saloon here. He died shortly after.

He probably never will get entirely over it.

(Placard in Vinton, Iowa)

$100 reward—To any person who can prove that I called Dr. P. Marion Simms, present minister of the Presbyterian Church of Vinton, Iowa, a liar in the session room, after the Sunday services, when he tried to kill me with a chair—A. E. ST. CLAIR.

Alas for the rairity of Christian chairity.

(Wausau, Wisconsin, Record-Herald)

Wanted to buy, Perfection oil heater. Must be in good condition. Write B.V.D. *Record-Herald.*

Why doesn't he change to o. f. red flannel kind, and save his money?

DO YOU BELIEVE IN SIGNS?

In the Schlitz Hotel, Milwaukee: *"In case of fire this bell will ring repeatedly at intervals."*

In Grinnell, Iowa: *"We will fit your head or bust."*

In Columbus, Ohio: *"Bill of Fear: Hungarian Goolash."*

In Dayton, Iowa: *"Dull ladies' shoes."*

In Escanaba, Michigan: *"This hotel is absolutely fire-proof. Fire escapes will be found at each end of the hall."*

In Chicago: *"Quick acting vices."* Butcher ad: *"Prim legs of lamb."* (Must refer to the paper cuffs they wear to the table.)

In St. Louis: *"Chairs caned at the rear."*

In store in Michigan: *"Duchess Trousers."* (The lace alone is worth the price.)

(Niles Star)

Wanted—Any part of fifty Plymouth Rock hens not over one year old. Inquire at this office or phone 98.

Send him the necks.

(Buck Creek, Indiana, News)

The Buck Creek K. of P. lodge will give an oyster and ice-cream supper Saturday evening at their hall. Also a free lecture on "Disease of Swine" by F. V. Hawkins of Indianapolis.

A swill time is promised for all.

(Pentwater, Michigan, News)

Miss Goldie Hartman of Pentwater visited her friend, Miss Blondine Hanson, Saturday.

Gold-tressed twins.

(Greeley, Colorado, Tribune-Republican)

Married man, thirty-three years old, desires change.

The first thirty years are the hardest.

(Ochiltree, Texas, News)

M. M. Emmett had a very cool bath yesterday, while working on his water-tank his holts slipped and he went in. No one could get to him to help him, and all he had to get out by was a rope and with over shoes and over coat it was hard climbing. He worked 'til he was almost give out and in desperation stopped but failed to let loose the rope, in a very short time his hands froze to the rope which gave him a corking idea he would reach as high on the rope as he could, hold a time 'til hand would freeze to the rope, then blow his breath on the lower 'til it turned loose then reach again, so finally reached the top. His feet are frozen but he is able to be at his business.

'Er, please take this letter to King Bruce of Scotland.

(Springfield Record)

FOR SALE—Fine combination horse.

When not employed as a horse he may be folded up and used as a writing-desk.

(Sandwich, Illinois, Free Press)

If the young people who one night recently drove their horse and buggy up over the curbing of the cemetery and stayed long enough to tramp holes in the sod and then drove the length of the parking, putting a lot of holes in the new seeding, will come and ask for it, we will give them what we found where their buggy stood, otherwise we will not.

Seed time and harvest.

(Reunion Announcement of the Class of 1913, U. of C.)

If you are prevented from attending, you may not know what you have missed, but, nevertheless, you will miss that which those who are more fortunate would prevent nothing within their power to deny them.

Such a headache!

(Roodhouse, Illinois, Record)

In a mention of the "Bungalow Dance" to be given to-night in K. of P. Hall, yesterday's *Record* stated that the costume requirements would be bungalow aprons for the ladies, which is correct, and the gentlemen should appear in overalls, which was an error. Gentlemen will wear blue shirts, and leave the overalls at home.

Aren't we having beautiful sunsets, lately?

Man in Taxicab Commits Suicide.

The meter should never face the passenger.

(Chicago Daily News)

HE was originally born in Chicago.

The first time you haven't much choice in the matter.

(Hopkinton, Iowa, Leader)

To whom it may concern: The stories that John Hartness is telling around are false—that George Hartness is beating him is not so. The trouble was John Hartness put a bucket on my stove. It had ice and snow on it, and a hole in it. I told him to take it off, it would break the stove covers. He would not, and George Hartness came from the other room and told him to take it off, that it was leaking, but he wouldn't. So George went to take it off and John Hartness struck him with the bucket and then came for him. George Hartness took him down and held him down and asked him if he would behave himself.

MRS. L. M. J. HARTNESS.

Then they both got mad and commenced to fight.

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PROSE OR WORSE

(Kearney, Nebraska, Hub)

The scene and the occasion were both beautiful and inspiring. The music was furnished by the birds, which were at their best on this bridal day. A meadow lark called to his mate across the lake, asking if he might come and join her. A brown thrush in a tree on the hill near by sent forth across the water a carol full of love and melody such as a Beethoven or a Chopin would strive in vain to imitate. The hills were dressed in their prettiest robes of green. The water was quiet. Nature was at her best. And the bride and groom, both, in tastiness of dress and in spirits, were in harmony with nature.

Tweet, tweet!

(Hokah, Minnesota, Chief)

The bride was attired in brown silk trimmed with ribbons and the groom in brown serge. The bridesmaid, Miss Elizabeth Hamieson, wore checkered silk trimmed in green, and the best man, Mr. P. R. Reilly, wore a blue velvet trimmed with *soie de cygne*.

A cygne that the groom will get his trimming later.

(Cedar Falls Record)

As Mary Ann Kaufman stood looking out upon her audience, acquainting herself with it, we realized something beyond her splendid physique, her perfect outer poise. It was the Oversoul, that power by which the true artist gains ascendency to the Inner Realm and "finds himself related to all his works," and by which "he travels a royal road to particular knowledge and power." Not all at once did the singer enter her audience with her upon the "royal road" of her particular knowledge and power." Seconded by her masterly accompanist, she played at first with our fancies, she brooded, as it was, over our expectancies, urging them to upward trend. She lured us into feeling our own worth as interpreters of that which she wished to give. And with the advance of her unique selection the audience became hers, ready to rise on the wings of each separate theme. There was the theme which seemed as a veritable sprite of song, with varied mood, now delighting itself in delicate, swaying motion, now reveling in riot of merriment, again stilled to one thin, sweet note as of a call of solitary cloisters of dreams, of mysteries unexplained—

Yes, yes, go on! go on!

(London Times)

Young author, unable to catch the public eye, despite possession of exceptional gifts, which include the wit of a Mark Twain, the philosophy of a Carlyle, the intricacy of plot of a Conan Doyle, the descriptive power of a Dickens, and the brilliance of dialogue of a Dumas APPEALS to some one having influence with publishers, to get one of his COMPOSITIONS READ by a discerning and competent critic, Box B, 568, The *Times*.

How he's after the ear.

(Atlantic City Press)

Minutes and minutes before the time set for the curtain rise the stream of expectant humanity gushed through all the wide entrance doors of the auditorium, broke and rolled forward, stopping only at the orchestra pit, piling on itself until the big theatre was packed. White bosoms gleamed like a myriad of mystic moonstones in the reflected light; flannels shimmered, diamonds flashed from their ivory resting-places, while fair eyes vied with them for brilliance. The babel of voices was like some great rhapsody—the stirring pulse of a vast concourse of friendly inquisitive human beings home to worship at the shrine of fantasy. Of a sudden a hush almost solemn fell upon the house. The curtain was rising with a tantalizing slowness, to the dying strains of the short overture——

And the "Passing Show" was on.

(Muskegon Times)

The chandeliers which hang from the ceiling are of beautiful design.

Such a happy thought it was to hang them there!

(Manistee, Michigan, News-Advocate)

Wanted—A young dog, one that will stay small. 389 First Street.

Of the ingrowing variety preferred.

(From a photographer's letter)

We employ some of the most beautiful girls in Chicago as models, girls with magnetic smiles and striking appearance. May I call with samples?

You're next!

(Phoenix Republican)

Will J. Bacon and Leona Pearl Crisp were united in marriage, yesterday, Judge Park officiating.

We'll meet you in the grill room.

(Fithian, Illinois, Herald)

Miss Mary DeLong, sister of the groom, played the Lohengrin Wedding March. The groom was decorated with arborvitæ and golden rod.

Members of his family, at least, remained through the ceremony.

(Herrin, Illinois, Journal)

Turkish baths are now opened under the City National Bank. Visit this health lavatorium and you will see it grow under the management of Prof. C. E. Destro.

Dead animals hauled away free. Call 173.

All the conveniences of home.

(Classified Ad)

LARGE front bay-window room; adj. almost private bath.

I should speak for the faucet end of the tub.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN SIGNS?

Ad in *Vogue*: "*Sara Baxter—Purchases Used Women's Apparel.*"

In Evanston, Illinois: "*Vanishing Cream—Not returnable.*"

In a Minneapolis theatre: "*Will the party who took the wrong auto robe please return it to the box office and get theirs?*" (Probably safer to stay away.)

In Chicago: "*Tailor, Ladies and gents remodeled and refined.*"

In Davenport: "*We're giving a service to our patrons that compels them to think of Crooks when there's any laundry work to be done.*"

On a tombstone in Batavia: "*If we must part let us go together.*"

In Chicago: "*Reign Umbrella Co.*"

In the Spencer Hotel, Marion, Indiana: "*Discourteous treatment, by the wailers, if reported to the proprietor, will be greatly appreciated.*"

(Davenport Democrat and Leader)

Irresistible negligées for gifts. So delicately lovely are these charming negligées that one almost hesitates to touch them lest they disappear in a mist.

Weather note: Foggy weather expected.

(New York Herald)

Winsted, Conn.—The autumn dance of the Free-From-Kare Klub, which was held last night at the Winsted Auditorium, would have been one of the social successes of the season here if some one had not placed a skunk in the grand piano, around which the Winsted National Orchestra was draped.

Wouldn't that take the starch out of 'most any one?

(Monmouth Review)

For sale—A Guernsey cow; gives a good quality of milk, also hay-fork rope and pulleys and small refrigerator.

Guernseys always were a good strain.

Other collections of "Prose or Worse" will appear in later numbers of EVERYBODY'S.

(Hannibal, Missouri, Courier-Post)

Wanted—To use horse for feed this winter. Address H. B. 1105 E. Gordon Street.

Garçon, some hors d'hoovers, please.

(Pontiac Leader)

EDITOR PONTIAC LEADER: I notice in the *Leader* of March 14, a statement of the shooting at Hacker's in Forrest resulting from a family quarrel. That is a mistake. There was no quarrel whatever. M. A. Hacker came home intoxicated and swore he would kill the whole family and made a dash for the boy. The boy ran out of the house and then Hacker came back after his wife and children and the boy got the gun to defend himself and the family. Mr. Hacker had a chair or something in his hands all the time. Please correct statement in to-day's paper.—MRS. M. A. HACKER.

You see it was this way.

(Goshen, Indiana, News-Tribune)

Ray Messick has sold the pacing mare to Walter Hertle, who contemplates starting a meat route in Goshen.

Will it be filly de mignon for yours?

(Keyser, West Virginia, Mountain Echo)

The numbers were interspersed with excellent chord music, provided by John Martin's orchestra, under the leadership of Harvey Patten, thus applying melody and symphony of song to the work, splendidly harmonizing with the surroundings, and blending, as it were, with the colors among the decorations and adding a tinge of elegance to the atmosphere already perfumed with flowers.

And chord music arose with its voluptuous smell.

(Ad in Keokuk Gate City)

LOST—Bird-dog, sixteen hands high. Answers to name Joe.

The same kind of a purp that chased Gulliver.

(Grinnell, Iowa, Herald)

Mrs. Umbenhauer presided at the altar. To the soft strains of Mendelssohn's Wedding March came the bride upon the arm of her brother Donald. They were met at the altar by the groom and the father of the bride, who was carried out in the decorations.

She always was the flower of the family.

(Paris, Illinois, News)

The interurban car due here at 10 o'clock Tuesday night struck a cow between stops 5 and 6.

Our old-fashioned cow had only four.

(Fort Worth Record)

The victim of the shooting admits that he did not know he was being shot at until the bullet struck him.

Some folks never do wake up.

(Goshen, Indiana, News-Times)

Members of the South Bend Police Department spent a fruitless two hours Monday morning in quizzing John Harvath, of Kentucky Street, who was shot and killed at Winklers Crossing.

He positively refused to be interviewed.

(Gonzales, Texas, Herald)

Last Sunday evening as darkness was spreading its cloak over the peaceful little cove of the San Marcos River, whose limping water glides listlessly over rocks and rills with just murmur enough to lull one to repose, and break in upon the serene tranquility that usually prevails over this little burg, a beautiful wedding was solemnized at the elegant and palatial home of Mr. and Mrs. B. Zedler, when their lovely daughter, Miss Antoinette, stood at the hymeneal altar and pledged her life and plighted her love to the man of her choice.

Just as the sun went down.

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Tutti-Frutti

By Wilbur S. Boyer

Johnnie Kelly, the red-headed city schoolboy, is no stranger to EVERYBODY'S. Here he is again, in an amusing tale of truancy. Mr. Boyer knows these boys, and makes them as real as any of the boys in your block. His next story is "The Lallapaloosa."

IT IS useless to try to tell a boy the motive of his teacher's disciplining. He knows. *He knows!* It is the pleasure it gives the teacher.

Johnnie Kelly was inwardly boiling, but even a fourteen-year-old boy learns to dissemble his feelings. Oh, why had he not suspected the saccharine smile cast upon him and other innocents by Sally Primton as, one by one during the week, lured by her apparent leniency, they fell for the solace of the refreshing chiclet?

Gum-chewing is a pleasure when pursued at one's own free will; but the cruel ingenuity of the teacher who conceived the idea of making gum-chewing a punishment for gum-chewing! Who but Sally Primton would have had the inspiration to stuff a boy's mouth with tutti-frutti gum until it could hold no more, and for an hour after school compel him to chew, *chew, CHEW?*

The teacher raised her head from the 8-A spelling papers on her desk to view through horn-rimmed spectacles the half-dozen boys lined up stiffly along the blank wall in back of the classroom like spies awaiting the firing-squad. As her eyes raked the line like a machine gun, each pair of jaws wagged with increased energy.

"Kelly, you chew so slowly, I fear you are not enjoying my party." She spoke softly—oh, with such cruel softness thought the red-headed victim. "As a special favor, I shall permit you to stay ten minutes longer."

No retort from Johnnie. He chewed faster. On the tip of his tongue there was a retort, but he did not use it. Then he thought of a better one. If she spoke to him that way again——Once started, the clever things he should have said came tripping to his tongue, each new one a delightful improvement on the one before; until the pleasure he was getting from the dialogue, as it should have continued, exhibited itself in a beaming smile.

"Ah, Kelly, now I see you find it more amusing. Good! I want you to enjoy yourself. You may take another two cents' worth and stay ten minutes longer."

THE smile vanished from the freckled face. Without a murmur he accepted his extra cargo and resumed his place in line, fully convinced that in the hereafter Sally Primton would be the ideal spirit to preside over the Bureau of Cruel and Unusual Punishments. One master-stroke alone would entitle her to that distinction: only a genius would have picked on this particular day to spring this crushing surprise.

The 102nd Regiment, returned from overseas, was to parade on the morrow along the streets of Washington Heights. Other organizations in New York had been honored by holidays for their parades, but teachers and pupils had waited this whole day for the welcome word from the Board of Education, and no message had come.

To-morrow, while the grown-ups cheered the boys in khaki, the younger generation must grind out the interest on a thousand dollars in Victory Notes for a year and a half at 4¾ per cent., name the nations that have changed their forms of government as a result of this war, and explain the Bolsheviki, giving the source of your opinions of them.

Miss Primton was as disappointed as her pupils. Besides, while she was in the "Five and Ten" buying gum for her party, some one had parted her from her handbag containing a dollar fifteen, a pair of diamond earrings which she had intended having made over into a brooch, and the card of a jeweler offering 6 per cent. discount to teachers.

"CALUCHIE, please step away from the wall. It doesn't need support. Van Zarn, if I recall correctly, you are very fond of gum, and your mouth is not half full enough. Here, take another two cents' worth."

With a groan, the Congressman's son slouched forward. He was brought up sharply by a light but imperious tap of the ruler.

"I don't like your walk," incised the teacher, still maintaining her voice on a chilling level. "Go back, sir, and come down that aisle properly. Chew ten minutes longer."

On Jack's second attempt he overdid the part. It was an insistent thwack of the ruler that halted him again.

"Gross disobedience of orders!" clicked Miss Primton. "Malicious impertinence in your manner! Try again, and stay another ten minutes!"

Thus it was that Jack Van Zarn and Johnnie Kelly left the school together, the last of the prisoners, conquered, sullen, bitter.

"Me jaws ache and I spit feathers," groaned Johnnie.

"Nuff for one month!" declared Jack, following Johnnie's example in resentfully plastering a pie of gum on the plate-glass of the front door under the legend, "P. S. 199, Manhattan."

"Glad she lost her earrings," spat out Johnnie. "What does she want to take it out on us for?"

"Say!" Jack was contemplating the two wads of gum on the door. "Your gum ain't half as big as mine."

"You ain't wise," chuckled Johnnie. "I made faces like I had a fistful inside. I got fi' cents' wort' saved, see?"

He exhibited his loot.

"Wha-a-at? She started us on five pieces and didn't she give both of us two more?"

"Yeh, but I begun on one and only stuck in one more when I turned me back the time she give me the two cents' wort!"

"And I nearly broke my jaws on seven sticks!"

"Don't be sore. Did you see how she made me work on me little two-cent wad? Some chawin', believe *ME!*"

"If she only knew it, hey?" laughed Jack.

"Dunno," growled his comrade, "but if she knew how me t'roat feels she'd cackle her teeth loose with joy. Are we goin' to stand for it? Can't we smear her all over the picture?"

"I'm ready for 'most anything," agreed Jack. "She's queered me. If I'd come right home after school there'd have been a chance of coaxing to stay home and see the parade, but it's so late now. I'm going to be in Dutch with my mother. If I let her think I got out at three and didn't come home, there won't be any use asking favors; and if I confess I was kept in—Good night!"

"No use my askin' to stay home," said Johnnie, "unless I was dyin.' But say!" His face lit up. "Ain't Sally always braggin' that nobody in her class ever played hooky?"

"Nobody ever dast," replied Jack ruefully.

"Well, let's us dast. We'll see the parade, too, while she's sweatin' away in the classroom. That'll sting her, or I'm a Heinie."

Jack was not enthusiastic. He had fears, qualms, compunctions. He had never played hooky, so he admitted.

"NEITHER have I," confessed Johnnie, "but it'll hurt old Sal more'n it will us."

"I don't know," said Jack, dubiously.

"When we tell our folks how bad we wanted to see the parade it won't seem half so fierce," argued Johnnie. "Jist ask your father if he wouldn't do the same if he was a boy."

"How about old Toe?"

The new truant officer was old Toe, a cognomen derived from the initials of his office—T. O. A fearsome reputation he had earned for himself in his short incumbency.

"Ever seen him?"

"No, but Victor Caluchie says he's tall and big—'most three feet across the shoulders—with a little black mustache—and he can run like the dickens."

"Ah, I bet he goes to see the parade ter-morrer."

"Vic says Toe got one policeman and caught eleven truants so slick and easy

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Gum-chewing is a pleasure when pursued of one's own free will; but the cruel ingenuity of the teacher who conceived the idea of making gum-chewing a punishment for gum-chewing!

that not one of 'em got a chance to run half a block. That's some truant officer!"

"Rats!" sneered Johnnie deprecatingly, "if we can't keep out of Toe's way, we deserve to be yanked up to Mr. Hartley like a couple o' rabbits."

The mention of the school principal's name acted as a damper upon Jack; but at length Johnnie cajoled his weak-kneed companion into acquiescence with the plan of vengeance on Miss Primton.

The next day Johnnie left the house early and met Jack. Books were deposited in the care of the keeper of the candy-store across the street from the school. There Johnnie also stowed his lunch—three corned-beef sandwiches, the demand for which had been explained by the presence in the sky of a cloud as big as one's hand; and as it was ironing-day, Mrs. Kelly had accepted his suggestion with relief.

JACK had a quarter to purchase his noonday meal—he never went home to lunch. This combined with fifteen cents which Johnnie had scraped together was to be blown in after the parade.

Straight for the line of march scurried the pair. They wriggled through the crowd that had gathered early, and found places near the curb. Johnnie must have pushed overzealously, for some one beside him spoke irritably.

"Hello, so there's no school to-day?"

One look up into the speaker's face and the boys slunk away; and the next minute they were making excellent time up a side street. The man was a tall, strapping fellow with a small, black mustache.

Between Broadway and Fort Washington Avenue near the upper end of Manhattan Island is a stretch of grass and rocks and trees as wild and trackless as the Adirondacks—so every small boy in the neighborhood loves to believe. There are secluded nooks out of sight of human beings on paved streets, and imagination supplies all details to complete the forest primeval. It is the enchanted world of the small fry of the Heights. To this haven the boys fled.

A short way in, they commenced a series of maneuvers that would have aroused the suspicions of an adult too serious-minded to remember his own boyhood. They stopped short in their tracks, walked backward counting one hundred steps, then hopped out of the path so as to leave no telltale footprint and tacked to the top of a knoll.

Here they scrutinized the landscape north, south, east, and west. All appeared satisfactory. Down they came and gravely walked in spirals and zigzags until they struck a ditch to the north. Up the bed of this they traveled and left it by catching the overhanging limb of a tree, climbing up it to the trunk, and down to the ground.

At length after other similar antics, both sprawled flat and wriggled in among the rocks and trees and bushes over a blind trail to a sheet of tin.

Assured by elaborate observations that no one was watching, they slid aside the tin, disclosing a hole in the ground two feet across. Into this the pair dropped, the second one in pulling the tin back into place over his head.

Jack struck a match and lit the candle in the lantern—the cover of a baking-powder can hung by wires from above—revealing their own private den, the niftiest settlers' retreat, the loneliest desert island cave in the ken of boyhood.

IT WAS some ten feet square and five feet high, the earth of the ceiling being supported by boards whose ends were set in the side walls; and the walls were decorated with comic supplements and pictures of celebrities—Pershing, Charlie Chaplin, Admiral Sims, Douglas Fairbanks, and Jack Dempsey—the softer sex having no place in this masculine retreat.

The very air of the den smelt of adventure. In and about had been enacted many exciting episodes in which the boys were ever the detectives, not the robbers; revenue officers, not smugglers or moonshiners; soldiers of Uncle Sam, never Indians or outlaws; always the heroes who matched wits with villains.

Usually adversaries were imaginary, or passing pedestrians played the parts unconsciously, yet, the exigencies of the play demanding, one might assume temporarily the despised rôle, always, however, with the provision that it was only make-believe and next time he should be on the side of law and order, and always with the understanding that in the end the villian should be foiled, the pirate hanged, the outlaw jailed, and the Indian should bite the dust. Not that there were any moral scruples; but what a thrill there is in the plaudits of the multitude, though they be but in the imagination of a boy hero!

Even in the present situation they conceived themselves on the side of right. For Sally was the tyrant; Toe, her hated lieutenant; any bluecoats he might lead against them, her hired Hessians; and they, her persecuted subjects dodging the minions of the oppressor. The story must end with her circumvented, disappointed, and chagrined.

"NOBODY couldn't 'a' lost a trail any slicker than we done jest now," boasted Johnnie, as the pair threw themselves upon burlap couches in two niches in the side wall.

"You said it," assented Jack proudly.

"Mebbe it wasn't old Toe," suggested Johnnie.

"He was tall and husky enough, though, for Toe," said Jack. "There isn't any use taking chances. Let's lazy around in here and have a good time while the other fellows stew in school."

"We'll play safe," agreed the lanky Johnnie. "If we stayed to the parade, somebody would be sure to pick us up and first thing you know we'd be hauled up to Mr. Hartley. I don't want to see the old parade, anyhow. All I want is to bust Sally's record and make her believe we seen the soldiers while she didn't. That'll be jest as much fun as really seein' the old parade."

"Right-O! All parades are alike, anyway."

Conversation, at first delectable, later began to lose flavor. And each became absorbed in his own thoughts.

"I'm goin' to take a look around," proclaimed Johnnie.

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In a tiny L of the cave were the ashes of a fire; above, a hole in the roof. By means of steps cut in the sides of this chimney, Johnnie climbed until his head protruded above the surface of the earth in the center of a small clump of bushes.

From this observatory he could see without being seen, so well was it screened. This feature of the retreat was their special pride. The opening was never used as an exit because that would have disturbed the soil and bushes, making the discovery of the hole likely.

Jack squeezed up beside his mate. A girl came trundling a baby-carriage along a path a few rods away. She stopped and looked about, and the watchers dropped back into their burrow like a couple of scared woodchucks.

"Think she seen us?" asked Johnnie.

"Of course not!" sneered Jack, failing to explain, then, the why of his retreat.

BACK into their bunks they crawled, and another period of thin conversation ensued.

At length the pauses became more and more oppressive.

"Must be most noon, I'm getting hungry," ventured Jack after a weighty silence.

"Wish I'd brought my sandwiches along," added Johnnie.

"Let's toss up and see who'll sneak out to a baker's to get some buns."

"Not on your life!"

More silence, made palpable by the faint candle flame, which burned straight up without a flicker. It annoyed Johnnie, did that flame. He commenced to whistle with vigor straight at it in the hope of giving it signs of life.

"Oh, shut up!" growled Jack. "Want to give us away?"

The tune ceased. Johnnie took up his belt two holes. "Let's tell stories," he suggested.

Bravely enough the tales began, but they languished.

"I'd give anything for a hunk o' cheese and a box o' crackers," said Johnnie.

Once more glum silence.

"It's like starvin' in the desert," observed Johnnie.

"Oh, it ain't really as bad as that," pooh-poohed Jack. "But come on. Don't you think we can crawl out and have some fun in the woods?"

"We're safe in here. Let's hang on a little longer until it's sure after three."

Stillness profound. The candle flame had steadied once more and to Johnnie took on the aspect of an accusing eye boring him through and through and reading his inmost secret thoughts.

This time fifteen minutes passed away—fifteen times sixty seconds that made their weight seem fifteen hours.

The red-headed boy drew from his pocket the five cents' worth of gum for which Sally Primton had paid so dearly, and contemplated it without enthusiasm.

"I suppose I'll like gum again after a while," observed Jack, eyeing the gum disapprovingly, "but I've sure got no stomach for it now."

"Of course we ain't starvin'," said Johnnie, "but this'll keep us from thinkin' about how it feels to be really starvin'."

Jack accepted his share. They chewed as though the pangs of hunger were indeed upon them, and the stillness was broken alone by the music of their jaws.

A shadow fell across the opening: "Hold on tight, I'm comin'," roared a bass voice.

There was no pleasure in this. Yesterday's experience had robbed all gum of flavor. The working jaws slowed like run-down clocks. They tried mumble-the-peg. It was no fun.

"Here goes," said Johnnie with resolution. "I'm goin' out, and darn truant officers and—and everythin'!"

OUT they crawled, replaced the tin, wriggled off a few yards, then arose and walked straight toward civilization. For some reason it was not deemed necessary to take the precautions in leaving the secret rendezvous that one always did in approaching.

They climbed the knoll from which earlier in the day they had taken observations, and once more looked about. Fort Washington Avenue lay within their vision a hundred yards away.

"Hey!" shouted Johnnie, "here comes some fun!"

Racing up the street was a man in a gray suit. A block behind was a policeman sprinting along at a lively clip. No boy ever passes up a chance to guy a policeman, provided it can be done with safety to the boy. And after their gloomy hours under ground, here appeared a welcome relief.

"Hurray! Two to one on the cop!" yelled Jack swinging his cap gaily.

"Say, your second cylinder's skippin'! Change der spark-plug!" bawled Johnnie, making a trumpet of his hands to assure the discomfiture of the officer.

But Gray-suit, instead of continuing his course up the block, turned off sharply into the woods in the direction of the hilarious pair. And as he did so, there was no mistaking the color and size of the hirsute adornment on his upper lip.

"Cheese it! *TOE!*" gasped Johnnie, and with the instinct of true ground-hogs the truants scampered for their burrow.

There was no trail-hiding this time. They made a bee-line for the cave and scrambled in. Any hopes they entertained of eluding the man with the black mustache were immediately dashed aside. Before they could replace the tin, a pair of gray legs straddled Johnnie's shoulders and crushed him to the floor of the cave. The

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truants waited for no parleys but sailed into the intruder with fists and feet.

"Hey, go easy!" panted the visitor backing away as far as the narrow confines would allow, undoubtedly disconcerted and alarmed at the ferocity of the unexpected attack.

But in reply the two boys flailed away so wildly in the semi-darkness that many of their swings landed on each other; and believing these blows to be the work of the enemy, they fought more desperately, both setting up yells loud enough to shame a Comanche.

The man succeeded in putting his hand over Johnnie's mouth. To his credit be it said, he refrained from returning the blows of the furious youngsters.

"Shut up, if you know when you're well off," he growled.

It was too much for Johnnie's temper. He, a Kelly, shut up and submit to being dragged ignominiously back to the classroom? Not while he had hands and feet and any breath in his body. Planting a foot in his captor's stomach, he began a double tattoo on the fellow's unguarded ribs.

"Let up, you big bully!" he howled as the man was forced to take his hand from Johnnie's mouth to guard himself. "You ain't goin' to choke me and git away with it. You ain't got no right."

"Trip him! Soak him!" yelled Jack, pummeling wherever he could reach.

"Kick him in the slats, Jack. Help! Murder! Police! Wait till I tell the judge, you big coward!"

Jack broke away. But quickly came his guarded warning from the chimney corner. "Beat it, Johnnie! Here's the cop."

A SHADOW fell across the opening. "Hold on tight, I'm comin'," roared a bass voice, and the next instant, two hundred pounds of law, squeezing through the entrance, landed upon the floor of the cave.

Johnnie leaped for the chimney. In another second he was in the open air. Crashing wildly through the bushes, he lit out after Jack, who had waited on no ceremony.

Too wise to race through inhabited streets, they stopped at the Fort Washington Monument—a massive tablet set into the side of a knoll—and lay down behind the old cannon that crowns the tablet and mound. Later they watched Black-mustache and policeman walk down the street together, dirty, disheveled, and weary. The men passed on the sidewalk right under the noses of the fugitives.

"The red-headed kid was too much for ye, wasn't he?" they heard the officer chuckle, and the other's responsive snort expressed his thoughts.

When the men had gone, Johnnie faced Jack ruefully. "Did you git that?" he asked. "I'm spotted."

"Gee!" sympathized Van Zarn. Then, on second thought: "S'pose he recognized me?"

"If he didn't, I won't snitch. I ain't that kind."

"Ah, go on!" pleaded Jack. "I don't want you to take all the blame."

"No," pursued Johnnie, deliciously thrilled with the idea of self-sacrifice, "they ain't goin' to git nothin' out o' me. I won't snitch."

"Ah, say! Ah, please."

But no argument would move Johnnie. There was too much pleasure in the thought of his intended martyrdom.

"Oh, well," Jack consoled himself—the simple expedient of confessing not occurring to him—"I bet we're both spotted. What'll we do now?"

"Let's go home. It must be after three."

They rose and stretched their weary limbs; and then both stood rigid, startled by the unexpectedness of all too familiar sounds. The foundry at Spuyten Duyvil began to blow. It was joined by a prolonged blast from the rubber factory on the Harlem, and faintly came the chorus from plants across the Hudson.

"Twelve o'clock!" gasped Johnnie. All their torture and torment had been packed into three hours.

Back to their underground dungeon crept two sad, nerve-racked lads. Let a veil be drawn over their next four hours.

IT WAS after four o'clock when they again emerged and with fearful hearts stole homeward. And on a street where they hoped to pass unnoticed, whom should they confront but Miss Sally Primton.

Under the shock, two tasteless morsels of gum—stays of starvation—were swallowed instanter and the pair took to their heels.

"Good night!" groaned Johnnie when they were safe around a corner, "she seen us, for sure!"

"Seen us?" snapped Jack. "How could she help seeing us when we almost bumped into her?"

"Oh, well, why should we care?" demanded Johnnie with an attempt at bravado; "it's after school hours."

"Why should we care?" repeated Jack. "Say, what excuse can we bring in now for being absent? We can't bring notes saying we were sick."

"I t'ought we didn't care what she done to us?"

"That's all right to say," sighed Jack; "but when we go right up to Sally Primton and tell her we played hooky, it's going to be warm."

This complication required thought; so back to the monument the pair dragged themselves; and there in the shadow of the name of Washington they discussed the most probable yarn to mitigate their punishment. But like the little George who possessed a little hatchet, the only instrument that could possibly have so mutilated his father's cherry-tree, they decided that they could not tell a lie—and get away with it—so they would tell the truth.

"That was what we was goin' to do, anyhow," reminded Johnnie; "and ain't we busted Sally's record like we planned?" He worked himself up into a state of enthusiasm as he thought of possible developments. "Now all we got to do is to git to Mr. Hartley early to-morrow mornin' and confess; and he'll take the whole thing in charge, and Sally and Toe and the cop gits left. Sally won't dast punish us after what Mr. Hartley does; and he'll let us off easy for tellin' the truth. And won't Primton be green in the gills?"

"Gee, that's fine!" agreed Jack, trying to catch his comrade's spirit. He had to manufacture his enthusiasm, for he was already inwardly suffering the tortures of the condemned.

"Do a lot o' extra homework to-night and have it ready to show to Mr. Hartley," advised Johnnie. "He'll fall for that."

And far into the night Johnnie sat up with books and pen and paper, to the surprise and delight of his father and mother. The extra work had to be all in geography, for his other books were still in the candy-store. Johnnie abhorred geography, but he stuck stubbornly to his task and laid aside an impressive pile.

Next morning, early, he stopped at the candy-store and, laden with all the paraphernalia of an industrious pupil, he crossed to the school yard. There he found Jack awaiting him.

"Say, Jack," said the freckled-faced Johnnie, "I've been thinkin' you'd better not go up with me. It was after four when Sally met you and me. That don't prove you was the feller that was with me when we done up the truant-officer. And if you wasn't reco'nized by Toe and the cop, I don't believe Sally will ever think that a nice boy like you would ever do such a thing."

"Ah, say!" exploded the Congressman's son, "you want to be a hero all by yourself, hey? That ain't fair. No, sir! I go, too."

"Lay off that stuff, Jack," pleaded Johnnie sincerely. "Don't you see, if I'm caught all alone and don't remember who the other feller was, they'll jist try to reform me and it won't hurt so much. But if you go too, Mr. Hartley will get all worried thinkin' what your father'll say when he finds it out and I'll git skinned alive for makin' you play hooky. Believe *ME*, I hope they don't find out you was with me."

"S'pose they know?"

"You wait over in the candy-store. If there's anythin' left of me, I'll come down and put you wise. Then you can go up and confess, if you've gotter. But give me a chanst first."

"But how am I going to explain not being in school yes—?"

Johnnie waved aside the question with a weary hand. "Wait till I come down before we think o' that. I've got enough to think about now." And he took the visitors' stairway to the principal's office.

RIGHT into the room he walked—and found himself in the presence of Mr. Hartley, Miss Primton, and the patrolman of the day before.

"Say!" exploded the officer, "that's the red-headed boy himself! The two of 'em put up some fight! The kid's sure got the guts."

Johnnie was completely flabbergasted. He had not expected to run into this trap.

"Who was your companion, Johnnie?" asked the principal, not unkindly.

"I dunno," mumbled the boy, "jist a feller I met in the woods."

"Would you recognize him again?"

"He looks like a million other fellers—I might mix 'em up."

"Too bad!" said the school chief regretfully.

"And that cave was hid so slick, sir," explained the policeman enthusiastically, "I'd have hot-footed it right past if this freckle-face and his pal hadn't yelled blue murder. They jist hung on and fought like—like the Irish."

"Johnnie has sand," admitted the principal.

"But what I come for was this," went

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Right into the room he walked, and found himself in the presence of Mr. Hartley, Miss Primton, and the patrolman of the day before.

on the policeman, drawing from his pocket a pair of old-fashioned earrings: "When I frisked the guy to see if he had a gat, I fished these out of his pocket. This teacher, here, reported the loss of a pair of di'mond earrings the other day, and I thought these was them; but the crook says, 'Bet they're out of a pop-corn prize package—they ain't worth fi' cents.' And say I to meself, 'If he's right, the boys at the station-house will kid the life out o' me for turnin' them in for real jewels. I'll find out before I make a monkey of meself.' So I've fetched 'em along this mornin' for Miss Primton to look at. They ain't yours, are they, ma'am?"

Miss Primton took them in her hand, gazing at them thoughtfully for some time in silence.

"THEY are," said she at length, in a tone that was singularly soft. "Is the man an old offender?"

"Nope—first offence—He was green and shaky."

"If these are real diamonds, what will the charge be?"

"Grand larceny."

"And if they are—only—er—cheap prizes?"

"Petit larceny—but don't worry, ma'am, we've got him on two counts; liftin' your purse is one, and smashin' the gum slot-machine yistiddy is the other. Parades is nuts for the likes o' him—most all the cops along the line of march, and everybody else watchin' the soldiers—but I jist happened to spot him by the suspicious way he was hangin' 'round. That showed he wasn't an old hand, and when he grabbed the change, I lit after him and chased him up Fort—"

"And if you didn't find these—er—cheap prizes in his pocket, he'd only have to face one charge of petit larceny?" suggested Miss Primton significantly. "What would be his punishment?"

"He'd probably git off with a suspended sentence. Hold on, ma'am, you're gettin' me in a—a ticklish persition."

"You can trust this boy," declared the teacher. "He promises not to say a word to anybody about it. You do, don't you, Johnnie?"

"Yes, 'um," gulped her pupil, too bewildered at this compliment to grasp what it was he promised.

"Well," said the policemen. "I suppose if he'd knowed they was real di'monds he wouldn't have tapped a penny slot-machine the very next day. He can't be such a hard bloke—he's only just about old enough to coax feathers on his upper lip."

"It isn't all his fault," pronounced Miss Primton with a pedagogical air of finality.

"The parents of this generation are criminally lazy, and indifferent, or obsessed by pusillanimous theories of sugar-coated child-training. If this young thief's mother had kept him off the streets nights, had kept an eye on his choice of companions, had taken an interest in his affairs and compelled him to walk a chalk line, if he had had teachers with the courage to care less for his present opinion and more for their effect upon his character-building—"

"Sure, that's right. They ought to jail the parents and the teachers," broke in the officer seriously, believing that he understood the drift of the lady's argument. "But if I don't turn in them earrings, and any one squeals—"

"JOHNNIE is all his teacher vouches for," assured Mr. Hartley. "You need not fear the thing becoming known. I am pleased to think that Miss Primton had Johnnie to thank for assisting in the recovery of her jewels."

The look that Miss Primton cast upon her pupil had in it one part thanks and three parts satisfaction at this vindication of her methods of discipline as exemplified in Kelly.

"Give the young man a chance. Let me keep my earrings and say no more about them."

"Well, I never seen your earrings, so that's the end of it." Then doubtless fearing the lady might launch into another arraignment of the present generation, the officer hastened to the more pleasant duty of casting bouquets at himself by indirection.

"The whole thing was funny. The guy seen the boys dive into the cave. I was so close behind that his only chanst to git away was to hop in after them and trust to my losin' him in the shuffle. And if it hadn't been for the kids' yells, I would of, too; because in among the trees I lost sight of the skinny little runt."

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Skinny little runt! The truant officer was tall and sturdy!

"But—but he—he had a little black mustache, didn't he?" stuttered Johnnie. His elders, in the press of the moment, attached no significance to his query, so, of course, they did not know the crum of comfort derived from the officer's.

"Sure! about as big as me eye-brow."

"I wish you knew your companion, Johnnie," observed Mr. Hartley, "he deserves his share of thanks. Few youngsters would dare tackle a desperate man like that. How fortunate you chose to spend the day in the woods! I suppose you have seen so many parades that you are tired of them."

Johnnie's head dropped. Perspiration stood out on his forehead. Now would come the reprimand for truancy—not even his aiding the law could excuse that. He felt of his breast pocket. Within was the extra homework over which he had groaned the night before. Would it avail anything?

"Most of the scholars," continued Mr. Hartley, "raced right off to the line of march to get front places, as soon as they came to school yesterday morning and were told that at the last moment the Board of Education had declared a holiday."

Johnnie afterward had a vague remembrance that Miss Primton took him by the hand and thanked him, making no mention of their encounter the previous afternoon. There was little else clear in his mind until he found himself outside the office and the policeman touched him on the arm.

"Here, kid," whispered the guardian of the law, "she don't know how to thank you, does she? There was somethin' else in our friend's pocket besides old-maid earrings. Take this—you helped catch 'im—mebbe you kin find your chum and divvy with him."

Into Johnnie's expectant fingers he dropped a handful of tutti-frutti gum.

Ol' Crotchety Shep

By Irving Bacheller

Ol' crotchety Shep!
Can't hardly step!
Yer cup is purty nigh filled.
Ol' age—gee whiz!
An' rheumatiz,
An' they say ye got to be killed.
We'll go to some spot
In the pastur' lot.
Come, Shep, limp 'long with me.
Way back in the time
Ye was in yer prime
How supple ye used to be!

As the arrows go
From a hickory bow
I 'member how ye'd bound
Down the ol' cow-run
Toward the risin' sun
An' up to the mullen ground,
When the dewdrops glowed
Like di'monds sowed
All over the fields complete.
Where a cow had laid
In some frosty glade
I'd stan' an' warm my feet.

Say, Shep, do ye see
That ol' thorn-tree
Up there on the rocky knoll?
'Member how we laid
All day in its shade
Watchin' a woodchuck hole?
I'd run away
From school that day
An' come back an' told a yarn,
An' when Pa took me
To the blue beech-tree,
You went an' hid under the barn.

'Pon my soul!
Here's the swimmin'-hole!
I 'member how you an' I
By that willer clump
Would run an' jump
Down into the water-sky
Kerwallop! An' then
I 'member when
I was drowndin' an' 'gun to shout,
You dove in
An' swum like sin,
An'—by thunder!—ye dragged me out.

Hit you with an ax?
Gingerbread an' beeswax!
I guess not—no siree!
In yer long life-way
There was never a day
Ye wouldn't 'a' died fer me.
As the Lord has shown,
Greater love has none
Than has he who would die fer a friend.
Yer poor soul may gain
By its sadness an' pain
An' the Lord'll fix the end.

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Mary Wollaston

By Henry Kitchell Webster

Author of "The Real Adventure," "The White Arc," etc.

V

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Dompteuse

HIGH FOREST is one of Chicago's idiosyncrasies, a ten-weeks summer season of grand opera with a full symphony orchestra, given practically out-of-doors. Its open pavilion seats from fifteen hundred to two thousand people, and on a warm Saturday night you will find twice as many more on the "bleachers" that surround it or strolling about under the trees in the park. The railroad runs special trains to it all through the season from town, and crammed and groaning interurbans collect their tolls for miles from up and down the shore.

It had begun as an amusement park with merry-go-rounds, Ferris wheels and such—to the scandalized indignation of numerous superurban persons whose summer places occupied most of the district round about. They took the enterprise into their own hands, abolished the calliope, put a symphony orchestra into the band-stand and, eventually, transformed the shell into a stage and went in for opera; opera popularized with a blue pencil so that no performance was ever more than two hours long, and at the modest minimum price of fifty cents.

It became, as I have indicated, an immense success. Its forces, recruited chiefly from among the younger stars at the Metropolitan, gave performances that wanted no apologetic allowance from anybody. It became an institution of which the town, and especially the North Shore, was boastful. But opera, no matter how popular, is never self-supporting, and the recurrence of the calliope, the scenic railway and the freak show remained a sinister possibility. Saving High Forest became a seasonal occupation of the leisure class.

THE heavier subscribers occupied the double rank of boxes across the middle of the pavilion and attended performances with a rather capricious assiduity. They had set out to direct the management of the enterprise, but they had long since relinquished everything but the most shadowy appearance of control into the hands of the one of their number who took it really seriously—that is to say like a game. He was very rich and, equally of course, he was a Jew, they being the only race to whom patronage and encouragement of the fine arts makes a genuine appeal as a sporting proposition.

Paula foresaw no easy conquest here. Her social prestige, part of which she enjoyed as John Wollaston's wife and part of which she had earned during the past four years for herself, counted as much against her as it did in her favor. It was evident, from the way the announcements of her prospective appearance at High Forest had been elaborated in the society columns of the newspapers, that it would arouse a lot of curiosity. It would be one of the topics that everybody, in the social-register sense of the word, would be talking about; and in order to talk authoritatively, everybody—four or five hundred people, that is to say—would have to attend at least one of her performances.

Nothing less than a downright unmistakable triumph would convince them. She was a professional in the grain and yet in this adventure she would be under the curse, so far as that double row of box-holders was concerned, of an amateur's status, a thing she hated, as all professionals do.

It was evidently from an instinct to cut herself off as completely as possible from these social connections of hers, that she rented for the summer a furnished house in the village of High Forest, within a mile or so of the park. John was rather disconcerted over this when she told him about it. She greeted him with it as a *fait accompli* upon his return to Chicago with Mary. She made a genuine effort to explain the necessity, but explanations were not in Paula's line, and she didn't altogether succeed.

She made it clear enough, though, that she didn't want to be fussed by the attentions of friends or family, of her husband least of all. She didn't want to be congratulated nor encouraged. She didn't want to be asked to little suppers or luncheons nor be made the objective of personally conducted tourist parties back stage. She didn't want to be called to the telephone, ever, except on matters of professional business by her High Forest colleagues.

All of this John pointed out could be accomplished at home. He himself could deal with the telephoners and the tourists. This was about all, apparently, that he was going to be good for this summer; but a watchdog's duties he could perform in a highly efficient manner.

"But a home and a husband are the very first things I've got to forget!" cried Paula. "Oh, can't you see!"

Darkly and imperfectly he did. The atmosphere of the home in which one has been guarded and pampered as a priceless possession was—must be—enervating, and to one who was screwing up her powers to their highest pitch for a great effort like this, it would be poisonous—malarial! He would have been clearer about it, though, but for the misgiving that, consciously or not, Paula was punishing him for having insisted that she carry her contract through. Or—if that were too harsh a way of putting it—that she was coquetting with him. Having told her down there in the South that he didn't care for her in a loverlike way, he might now have an opportunity of proving that he did—over obstacles!

IT GAVE him a twinge, for a fact, but he managed to ask good-humoredly if this meant that he was to be barred from the whole show, from performances as well as from rehearsals and the High Forest house.

"I won't care," she said with a laugh of desperation, "after I've once got my teeth in. But until then—— Oh, I know it sounds horrible, but I don't want to even—feel you; not even in the fringe of it.

"I'll tell you who I would like though," she went on over a palpable hesitation and with a little flush of color rising to her cheeks. "I can't live all alone up there, of course. I could get along with just a maid, but it would be easier and nicer if I could have some one for a—companion. And the person I'd choose, if she'd do it, is Mary."

He said, not quite knowing whether to be pleased or not, that they could ask her about it at all events. They were rather counting on her out at Hickory Hill, but he didn't know that that need matter. Only wasn't Mary—family herself, a reminder of home?

"Not a bit," said Paula, with a laugh. "Not but what she likes me well enough," she went on, trying to account for her preference (these Wollastons were always concerned about the whys of things), "but she stands off a little and looks on; without holding her breath, either. And then, well, she'd be a sort of reminder of you, after all."

Put that way he couldn't quarrel with it,

THE STORY

WHEN the story opens, Mary Wollaston and her brother Rush are about to return—one from war work in New York, one from overseas—to their home in Chicago. During their time together in New York, Rush realizes Mary's nervous tension, but never glimpses the truth that, living alone in New York, she had been swept off her feet during the hectic period of 1917-1918. Neither has been much at home since the marriage of their father, a distinguished surgeon, to Paula Carresford, a young and temperamental opera-singer.

Paula has recently "discovered" Anthony March, an unusual piano-tuner who is also a composer of great promise, and it is to an atmosphere of considerable strain, caused by John Wollaston's jealousy both of March and of Paula's career, that Rush and Mary return. On their first evening at home Doctor Wollaston gives a dinner in their honor, after which Paula sings some songs of March's. Mary escapes from the guests into a darkened room next the studio and there encounters March. They are both greatly moved and while the music lasts are drawn together in a remarkable mood of breathless understanding. A brilliant producer has heard the songs and that evening, despite her knowledge of Doctor Wollaston's jealousy, Paula accepts an offer to sing in the opera at Lake Forest the following summer. Her début is to be made in an opera written by March, but he is unable to rewrite it in accordance with her rather self-centered views. During this time Doctor Wollaston is taken ill with pneumonia, and Paula loses all interest in March and her music in her anxiety for her husband.

After Doctor Wollaston's recovery, Mary, with her aunt, visits Rush at the model farm which belongs to him and his friend Graham Stannard. Stannard asks Mary to marry him, and she promises to do so "if she can." When Paula, at Doctor Wollaston's wish, leaves him alone in the South—where they have been during his convalescence—to carry out her contract with the Lake Forest opera, Mary joins him. She tries to tell him of her experiences in New York, but finds it impossible to do so.

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"Those Wollastons can certainly dance," Sylvia remarked to her brother. "I wonder they'll have anything to do with either of us. Let's just watch them for a minute. Here, we'll turn the piano around, so Mr. March can see, too."

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though there was a sort of a challenge about it that chilled him a little. Watched over by his own daughter (this was what it came to) Paula would be beyond suspicion—even of Lucile.

Mary, when the scheme was put up to her, was no less surprised than John had been, but she was pleased clear through, and with a clean-cutting executive skill he had hardly credited her with, she thought out the details of the plan and revised the rest of their summer arrangements to fit.

The Dearborn Avenue house should be closed and her father should move out, root and branch, to the farm. The apple house was now remodeled to a point where it would accommodate him as well as Aunt Lucile very comfortably. The boys and the servants could live around in tents and things. She'd only want one maid for the cottage at High Forest, and the small car, which she'd drive herself.

THE sum of all these activities that Mary proposed for herself added up to a really exacting job: housekeeper, personal maid, chauffeur, chaperon and secretary. It was with a rather mixed lot of emotions that John thought of delivering her over to be tied to Paula's chariot wheels like that. One of the two women who loved him serving the other in a capacity so nearly menial! The thought of it gave him an odd sort of thrill even while he shrank from it. Certainly he would not have assented to it, had it not been so unmistakably what Mary herself wanted. Her reasons for wanting it he couldn't feel that he had quite fathomed.

There was, as a matter of fact, nothing fine-spun about them. It was a job in the first place and gave her, therefore, she mordantly told herself, an excuse for continuing to exist; it was an escape from Hickory Hill (clear cowardice this was, she confessed. That situation would have to be met and settled one way or the other before long; but her dread of both the possible alternatives had mounted since her frustrated attempt to confide in her father). The third reason, which she avowed to everybody, was simple excited curiosity for a look into a new world. The mystery and the glamour of it attracted her. Paula's proposal gave her the opportunity to see what these strange persons were like when they were not strutting their little while upon the stage.

Mary took real comfort in Paula's companionship; found an immense release from emotional pressure in it. One might quarrel furiously with her (and it happened Mary very nearly did, as shall be related presently, before they had been at High Forest three days), but one couldn't possibly worry oneself about her, couldn't torture oneself feeling things with Paula's nerves. That was the Wollaston trick. What frightful tangles the thing that goes by the name of unselfishness, the attempt to feel for others, could lead a small group like a family into!

Another thing that helped was that during the fortnight of rehearsal before the season opened, there literally wasn't time to think. They were simply pelted by perfectly external events, a necessity for doing this, an appointment to do that, an engagement somewhere else. It was like being caught out in a driving rain. You scuttled along; snatched a momentary shelter where you could.

The matter of Paula's clothes made one of the most serious inroads on their time. Back in Vienna, when Paula first met John, she'd owned, of course, a professional wardrobe of sorts, the accumulation of years of singing a wide repertoire of rôles. But in the flight of August, 1914, all the trunks containing it had got left behind. They turned up in Chicago, or most of them did, a few months after the marriage, when their importance—sentimental as well as intrinsic—was at its lowest ebb, and had lain disregarded ever since. When they were shipped to High Forest in a truck and spread out for exhibition, Paula, with one look of horror, condemned the lot. They gave her, she said, the creeps. And it was not hard to understand how their tawdry exiguities, bringing home as they did memories of the hardships and disappointments—oh, the downright poverty—she had escaped in marrying John, might seem, on the edge of this new adventure, a thoroughly unhappy omen.

Novelli, who was a permanent part of Paula's *entourage* these days, happened to be present at this devastating spectacle, and suggested as a person to appeal to in the emergency his sister-in-law, Rose Aldrich.

There had been a tempestuous interval in Rose's married life when she had made a profession of designing costumes for the theatre, and had demonstrated a real genius for it. Indeed, she had not now altogether abandoned it. The firm that went by her stage name still did a thriving business and enjoyed her occasional supervision. But this happened to be one of her quiescent intervals, and she undertook with gusto the commission to dress Paula for the half-dozen operas she was to appear in.

It was as natural, of course (an inevitable reaction, really, from the sight of the cheap, shabby fineries that had been exhumed from the trunks), that Paula should give Rose *carte blanche* as that Rose should take it. Equally of course, the thought of what the bill would run to became a nightmare to Mary, who, since her talks with her father down at Tryon, realized the importance of economy. It was not a case, though, where she could interfere, even by a hint, and anyhow the results Rose got, working *con amore* on a subject like Paula would have made hay of the most resolute of prudential considerations. Her first effort, the "Tosca" gown (in the High Forest version only the second and third acts were given), seemed the climax of possible loveliness, but when she went on to "Thaïs" and the "Love of the Three Kings," she attained the impossible—which, of course, was what Paula merely took for granted.

GETTING clothes on this scale would have filled the time of a woman of leisure to the brim. A bridal trousseau would have been nothing to it. But with Paula these activities had to be sandwiched in with daily rehearsals—long ones, too—hours with Novelli while she memorized half-forgotten parts, interviews with reporters, struggles with photographers, everything that the diabolic ingenuityof the publicity man could contrive. He, by the way, regarded Paula as his best bet, and lavished his efforts upon her in a way that stirred her colleagues (rivals, of course) to a frenzied exasperation over his sinister partiality to this "society amateur"!

(They all but enjoyed a terrible revenge, as poetic justice narrowly missed having it, for the extent of her advance publicity and the beauty of her clothes proved to be the rocks she went aground on. Only a lucky wave came along and floated her off again.)

Mary's quarrel with Paula, though it never came off—never, for that matter, got through to Paula's consciousness even as an approach to one—had, all the same, a chain of consequences, and so deserves to be recorded. The opera management was supposed to supply Paula with a piano, and they found it already installed in the High Forest house when they moved in; a small grand of a widely advertised make. This instrument Paula rejected out of hand. She dug half a dozen vicious arpeggios out of it, and at once telephoned the office to take it away.

It may be assumed that they sighed over this ultimatum in a resigned sort of way, cursed a little, perhaps, but over the telephone they promised a new piano as soon as it was possible to procure one. Against the danger of delay, however, they would send round at once an expert who would attempt to get the instrument into passable condition.

He came, or rather two of him did, since his functions had to be divided, a piano-tuner and a rather tired-looking diplomat from the executive staff. The diplomat warmly agreed with Paula that the piano was an outrage, assured her that superhuman efforts were already being made to secure for her an altogether superior instrument. Then, having set the tuner to work under instructions to exhaust the resources of his skill upon this monstrosity which had by so unfortunate an error been supplied to Madame Carresford, he went away.

PAULA and Mary had to go, too, to a rehearsal. When it was tried again the next morning, Paula declared that however the tuner had occupied his time during that afternoon, he had certainly done nothing to the piano. It was as bad as ever—or a little worse. Then in the midst of a petulant outburst which had, nevertheless, a humorous savor (they'd promise and pretend till kingdom come. They'd even take real trouble to get out of complying with her simple request for a new piano), she pulled herself up short and stared at Mary.

"What idiots we are! I am, anyhow. I'd forgotten all about March. He can make a piano out of anything. When he's tuned this, I won't want another. I've got his telephone number somewhere. You don't happen to remember it, do you? Why? What makes you look like that?"

For Mary was staring at her—speechless. The hurly-burly of events since she had come home from North Carolina with her father to take her plunge into Paula's affairs, had driven her own pretty well out of her mind. She had stopped thinking about Graham. She'd given over worrying about Rush. But she had not forgotten Anthony March. The alternative possibility that Paula might have gone on with his opera, that he might have been, but for what her father spoke of as rough justice, attending rehearsals of it, hearing that big orchestra making a reality of its unheard melodies, had been much in her mind. She had wondered whether it was not really in Paula's, along with a regret for his downcast hopes. He was, in a way, the ladder she had

(*Continued on page 100*)

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A Partnership of the Theatre

By Alexander Woollcott

Photo by Davis & Sanford.

Hartley Manners, the husband of Laurette Taylor and the author of her plays.

Photo by Davis & Sanford.

Laurette Taylor as Madame L'Énigme in Mr. Manner's latest play, "One Night in Rome."

FROM the days of Beaumont and Fletcher, much of the most successful and satisfying work in the theatre has been done when two people have so interwoven their lives and thoughts that they are more fruitful together than ever they could be apart. Among these famous partnerships of the stage, there have been associations of every kind.

Two comedians meet in their early days, become friends, make plans and we have such a joyous and indissoluble team as that of Montgomery and Stone. A gifted composer finds, by the rarest luck, a librettist who can free all the music that is in him, and we have in consequence such a series of imperishable operas as Gilbert and Sullivan wrote to set the feet of the world a-tapping. Two favorite players, E. H. Sothern and Julia Marlowe, each needing the strength and support of the other, form a partnership that is still, after many years, the delight of this country.

An odd and whimsical American comedienne finds on the other side of the Atlantic an odd and whimsical chap, whose vagrant fancies her charm is peculiarly suited to express, and the Barrie-Maude Adams plays come to life year after year at the Empire in New York. To this lengthening list must be added now the tested and recognized partnership which has been formed by Laurette Taylor and J. Hartley Manners.

THAT partnership was sealed with their marriage during the long and happy life of "Peg o' My Heart," the play which he wrote for her, which finally and firmly established her as a star both in New York and London and made Hartley Manners one of the most prosperous playwrights of his age. Since their marriage she has created no rôles that were not of his imagining nor played any, unless you count her brief and not wildly applauded excursions into Shakespearian enterprise for some special matinées a few seasons ago. Nor has he during that time employed his experience and his dramatic gift except to provide, as she needed them, new plays for Mrs. Manners.

Whereupon the wiseacres of Broadway, being talkative folk with short memories, have taken to saying that Laurette Taylor made Hartley Manners, or that Hartley Manners made Laurette Taylor, or that they made each other—have taken, in short, to saying everything except the the fairly obvious truth that both were already marked for triumph, that both had already won their spurs when they met, that each would have prospered independently had their paths never crossed.

Certainly, long before Miss Taylor, with her dog Michael clasped in her arms, stumbled and skated before an audience in the first performance of "Peg," there had not been lacking those who marveled at her and proclaimed a day when she would be recognized as belonging in the front rank of the English-speaking stage. As for "Peg o' My Heart" without Laurette Taylor—that is no unthinkable phenomenon.

If ever a comedy was thoroughly established as able to proceed under its own steam, unaided by the towing power of any actress in particular, that comedy is "Peg o' My Heart." It was successfully played by so many different actresses outside New York that its central rôle became known as one of those magic, fool-proof parts in which it is impossible to fail. When, after hundreds of performances in London, Miss Taylor, growing weary, packed up and departed, the preposterous play, instead of collapsing politely out of deference to her, persisted in running on and on for hundreds of performances more.

"PEG," indeed, has been a world-wide play. It has played about six thousand performances in this country and something over four thousand in Great Britain and Ireland, Denmark, Holland, India, Egypt, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and Hawaii.

And "Peg" was by no means Mr. Manners's first successful play. An English actor with Irish blood in his veins, he had written a dozen pieces for the theatre before his comedy of the little Irish hoyden. Some of these were as well known, as "The Crossways," in which the fading loveliness of Lily Langtry was exhibited to this country; "The Patriot," a farce written with and for that chronic collaborator, Willie Collier; "The House Next Door," which achieved a year's run on Broadway, and "The Girl in Waiting."

It was during the preparations of his piece, "The Great John Ganton," when he was in quest of a leading woman for it, that some passer-by on the Rialto told Hartley Manners there was a remarkable young actress rehearsing in a ghastly piece at the Seventy-first Regiment Armory in New York. Following this clue, he went over to the armory and, during a listless midsummer rehearsal there, stood watching with interest and admiration the work of the woman with whose fortunes his own were to be so closely intertwined.

HE SAW an actress young (still in her twenties), fair, with a comedy touch as light as a feather and a mobile, infinitely reflective face, across which the emotions played like sunlight on shimmering water. He saw a graduate of all the hard schools of the theatre, for the Laurette Taylor rehearsing in the armory that day had been on the stage for many years and served a novitiate such as few stars in our time have had to undergo.

Such a princess royal of the theatre as Ethel Barrymore never knew what it meant to graduate from the parochial festivals of a Harlem church to the cheapest of continuous vaudeville, to jump from there to the stock company at the old Third Avenue Theatre in Seattle, where rough plays such as "The Queen of the White Slaves" and "The King of the Opium Ring" were hastily embodied for the delectation of still rougher audiences, and where an actress, engaged at forty dollars a week, must needs learn, beside her trade, all the tricks of dyeing and turning a memorably meager wardrobe.

When, in these later and more festive days, Laurette Taylor is playing in some Manners comedy in New York, and near by Joseph Santley is dancing and singing to the intense satisfaction of the younger generation, you wonder if they remember the less prosperous times when he was a boy wonder, touring the cheaper circuits in such masterpieces as "From Rags to Riches," and she was the girl, engaged to be rescued nightly from predicaments fraught with peril, and to utter such senti-

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ments as "Rags are royal raiment when worn for virtue's sake."

That the aspiring little Loretta Cooney, washing dishes up in Harlem, and branching out later in K. of C. entertainments as "La Belle Laurette," should in time make her later stage name one to conjure with in New York and London, that she should see the most forbidding doors at last swing wide to her—well, that is just one of those Cinderella romances which are the eternal miracle of America.

BUT these troubled days were already left far behind when "Peg" was written. If it is true that Hartley Manners had actually known the glow of having three plays running on Broadway at one time, Miss Taylor also had been enthusiastically applauded. But it was "Peg" that really brought both into their own. It established them in a position of such vantage that nowadays, when word goes forth that Mr. Manners is in the throes of writing a play and that Mrs. Manners is minded to play it, there is no more question about its acceptance than there used to be a question as to whether the Savoy Theatre would accept the next Gilbert and Sullivan opera.

It is amusing to remember that it was not always thus. It is true, though difficult to believe, that "Peg" was received in gingerly fashion by the managers and that no less a person than the reputedly shrewd George M. Cohan turned it down. It is easy enough to understand any manager missing the values of any script laid cold and inert upon his desk, but "Peg" was *read* to Mr. Cohan, read with the broth of a brogue, the complete understanding, and the rippling laughter of Miss Taylor herself. However, another manager was less impervious and in time the great success was scored.

It followed, as has been said, the earlier Manners plays—"The Great John Ganton" and "The Girl in Waiting." Since its course was run, there have been "The Harp of Life," "Out There," "The Wooing of Eve," "Happiness," "Barbarazza" (which only Los Angeles has seen), three or four short pieces done at special matinées in 1914, and "One Night in Rome," the play which has served as Miss Taylor's vehicle this season.

In these comedies she has ranged from an English mother to an Irish colleen, from a Cockney slavey, such as "'Aunted Annie" was, to a "mystic lady" with an earnestly acquired Italian accent, such as the *Madame L'Enigme*, who gazes into the crystal in "One Night in Rome"—a comedy on fear, of which the title has such painful associations for any player who has ever done the smaller one-night stands in up-state New York.

THE variety of these rôles is evidence of a controlling ambition and is a sufficient comment, one would think, on the careless notion that Mr. Manners writes plays to "fit" his wife, for, besides reducing a respectably competent and imaginative playwright to the level of a dressmaker, that notion also belittles a really first-rate actress. There is about as much need to fit Miss Taylor with a rôle as there is to match a chameleon with a color.

Any rôle she plays, however, at once becomes so colored by her qualities as a person, so defined by her method, and so complicated both by her distinct limitations and her all-conquering charm, that it seems like an invention of her own and begets the ever-recurrent legend that she really does much of the writing herself.

You may be sure that her eyes as well as his rove acquisitively over every group they join for character possibilities and that they never come home after a supper without comparing notes. You may even hazard the guess that during many a rehearsal when some imagined scene of his is at last quickening into a living thing, she puts in some such words as "Wouldn't it go better this way?" or "I think she would be more apt to say this," and so tinges the play with her own memories, and her own abundant humor.

But for the most part, the division of labor is clearly marked in this partnership. He writes the plays. She acts them. It is our part to applaud rapturously, which we usually do pretty well.

There must be room found for some mention of a third member of the partnership—*Peg's* dog Michael. Michael joined on the night of the New York première of "Peg." The dog who had been playing the part *en route* collapsed under the nervous strain or got the colic or in some way became indisposed at the eleventh hour. There followed a scramble to find an understudy, and some one thought of the pound as a place likely to shelter one with just the right roughneck make-up.

Michael, purchased for one dollar, made a great hit the first night, remained in the cast throughout the New York and London engagements and now, retired from the stage, lives quietly at the headquarters of the partnership in East Nineteenth Street. It was discovered in time that Michael had been somewhat too hastily named. The name should have been Cathleen ni Houlihan, for she has on several occasions offered what *Peg* would probably have called "hostilities to fortune."

Photo by Mishkin.

This is Michael, who for years played in "Peg o' My Heart" and is now retired from the stage. He and Miss Taylor are spending a quiet evening at home.

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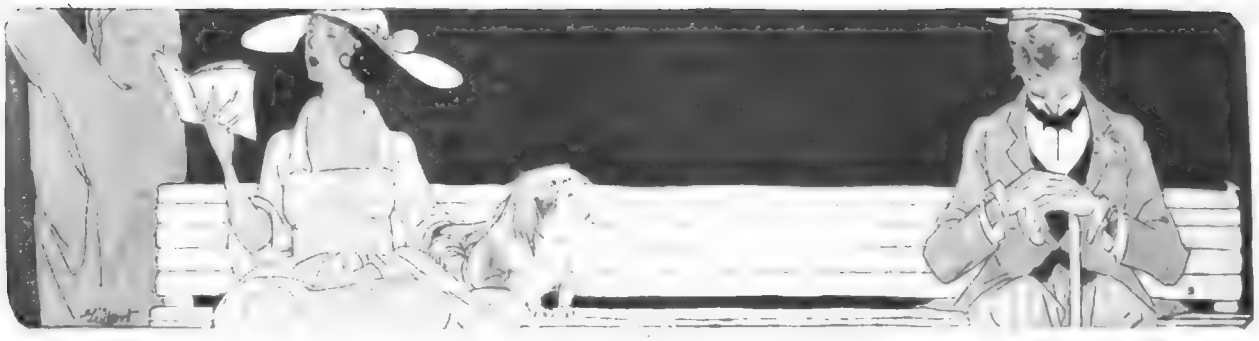

UNDER *the* SPREADING CHESTNUT TREE

IN A small town, not long after a fire, some children held a fair. The sum realized they transmitted to the pastor of the church. Their letter read:

"This thirty dollars was raised by a fair, and we are sending it to you. Please give it to the fire sufferers.

"P. S.—We hope the suffering is not all over."

THE armistice had just been signed and while on the way back from the front we stopped in a shell-wrecked town for repairs. A negro labor battalion was at work on the road filling up shell-holes.

"Am de war really ober?" one of them asked.

"It sure is, Sambo."

"Well, maybe it am for you folks, but," he added spitting on his hands, "I ain't had no orders to cease firin' yit."

IN THE days before prohibition, Mr. MacGregor, strolling up the banks of the lake, came upon a city visitor fishing, but with nothing in his basket.

"Man," said MacGregor, "ye winna catch any fish here. You'll hae tae gang a bit further up till ye come tae a guid spot."

"But how will I know when I come to a good spot?"

"Hoots, mon," said MacGregor, "ye can easy tell a guid spot by the number o' empty bottles lyin' aboot."

EDITOR'S NOTE

Though the sign is the Chestnut Tree, no story is barred by its youth. We will gladly pay for available ones. Address all manuscripts to "The Chestnut Tree," enclosing stamped, addressed envelope.

ARMISTICE night at a small town in England, a "bunch" of American and British officers were celebrating in a café.

Toward midnight a Briton suggested that "One of our American cousins offer a fitting toast for the occasion." This was a popular move, and the Americans selected Colonel F——. He was assisted to a standing position on a table, and his adjutant, Lieutenant C——, stood by.

F—— began with glass upraised: "Brother officers, one and all, I propose you join me in drinking deeply to the health of that noble monarch, that wonderful character on the throne of the British Empire, King George the—, King George, the—. Say, C——, what the hell is his number?"

MARIE had most pronounced ideas as to the rights and wrongs of her sex.

"Don't you think that a woman should get a man's pay?' she was asked.

After a moment's reflection Marie replied: "Well, I think she should let him have car-fare and lunch money out of it."

THE manager of a small department-store sought out the proprietor, saying: "I can't do a thing with Jones, the new salesman. I have tried him at a half-dozen places, and every time I find him asleep."

"Put him at the pajama counter," said the boss, "and fasten a sign like this on him: 'Our night-clothes are of such a superior quality that even the clerk who sells them can not keep awake.' "

MOSES ERASTUS BROWN was a very big man, and, therefore, felt it would be safe to remonstrate rather insinuatingly with his smaller opponent who had been rolling the bones with an ability that argued something more than luck. A race riot followed. A few minutes later a friend looked upon the battered countenance of Moses and expressed his pity.

"Ah'll git even with him," proclaimed Moses. "Ah'll fix him!"

"What you goin' to do?" questioned his friend. "You ain't goin' tuh fight him?"

"No," said Moses, "but Ah'll git even with him! Ah'll watch him, and de fust time dat niggah puts his hands in his pocket, Ah'll have him arrested foh packin' concealed weapons!"

MR. HEADLEY was making a trip on a train which afforded no dining-car. When they came to a stop at a station with a restaurant near by, he beckoned to a small boy on the platform. "Bring me a sandwich and buy one for yourself," he said, giving the child twenty cents.

The boy returned in short order, munching a sandwich. He handed ten cents to Headley.

"There was only one sandwich left, mister," he said.

"BUY me some candy, Dad!" begged a child of his father.

"Why don't you buy it," asked the parent, "with the dime I just gave you?"

"It's down my neck," said the child.

"Well, shake it out."

"But, Dad, I can't. It was in my mouth when it went down."

HENDRICKS, a dramatic critic, took his wife to see a new show. Afterward he asked her how she liked it.

"Simply fine," she replied, "only there was one impossibility in it."

"What was that, dear?"

"Well, between the first and second acts there was a lapse of two years, and yet they had the *same* servant."

"ONLY one man in this church is awake, and he's a babbling idiot!" snorted the preacher, looking over the congregation after a long sermon on a hot Sunday.

"Don't forget me, sir," said the idiot respectfully.

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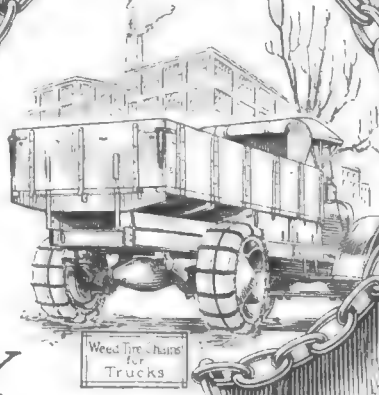
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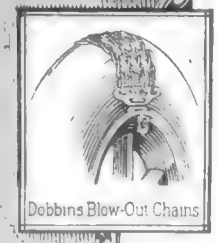
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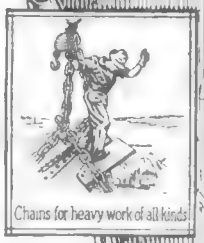
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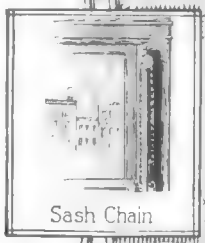
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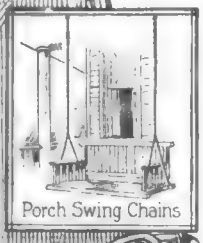
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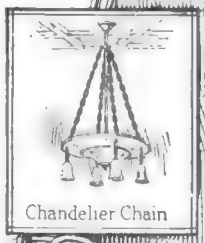
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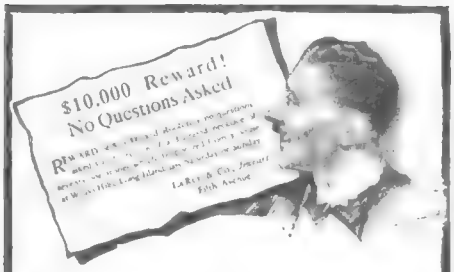

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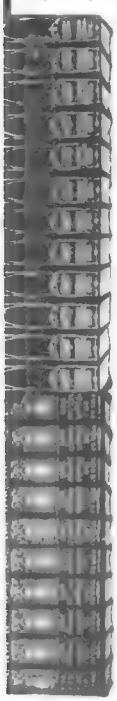

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HIDDEN CREEK

(Continued from page 34)

That's my man Carthy. He keeps order. You bet you he does keep it, too. And beside him stands a girl. Well, she's the kind of girl you—the cowboy—would a dreamed about, lyin' out in your blanket under the stars, if you'd a knowed enough to be able to dream about her. After you've set eyes on her, you don't dream about any other kind of girl. And just seein' her there, so sweet and bright and dainty-like, makes a different fellow of you. Say, goin' into that bar is like goin' into church and having a jim-dandy time when you get there, which is something the churches haven't got round to offerin' yet, to my way of thinking. Now, I want to ask you Miss Sheila, if you've got red blood in your veins and a love of adventure and a wish to see that real entertaining show we call 'life'—and mighty few females ever get a glimpse of it—and if you've acquired a feeling of gratitude for Pap, and if you've got any real religion, or any ambition to play a part, if you're a real woman that wants to be an in-spireation to men—Well, ma'am, I ask you, could you turn down a chance like that?"

HE STOOD away a pace and put his question with a lifted forefinger.

Sheila's eyes were caught and held by his. Again her mind seemed to be fastened to his will, and the blood ran quickly in her veins. Her heart beat. She was excited, stirred. He had seen through her shell unerringly as no one else in all her life had seen. He had mysteriously guessed that she had the dangerous gift of adventure, that under the shyness and uncertainty of inexperience there was no fear in her, that she was one of those that would rather play with fire than warm herself before it.

Sheila stood there, discovered and betrayed. He had played upon her as upon a flexible young reed: this stop, her ambition; that, her romanticism; third, her vanity; the fourth, her gratitude; the fifth, her idealism; the sixth, her recklessness. And there was this added urge—she must stay here and drudge under the lash of Momma's tongue, or she must accept this strange, this unimaginable offer. Again she opened her eyes wider and wider. The pupils swallowed up the misty gray. Her lips parted.

"I'll do it," she said, narrowed her eyes and shut her mouth tight. With such a look she might have thrown a fateful toss of dice.

Sylvester caught her hands, and pressed them to his chest.

"It's a promise, girl?"

"Yes."

"God bless you!"

He let her go. He walked on air. He threw open the door.

There on the threshold stood Momma.

"I kind of see," she drawled, "why Sheila don't take no interest in dancin'!"

"You're wrong," said Sheila very clearly. "I have been persuaded. I am going to the dance."

Sylvester laughed aloud. "One for you, Momma!" he said. "Come on down, old girl, while Miss Sheila gets into her party dress. Say, Aura, aren't you going to give me a dance to-night?"

His wife looked curiously at his red excited face. She followed him in silence down the stairs.

Sheila stood still listening to their descending steps, then she knelt down beside her little trunk and opened the lid. The sound of the fiddle stole hauntingly, beseechingly, tauntingly, into her consciousness. There in the top tray of her trunk wrapped in tissue-paper, lay the only evening frock she had, a filmy French dress of white tulle, a Christmas present from her father, a breath-taking, intoxicating extravagance. She had worn it only once.

It was with the strangest feeling that she took it out. It seemed to her that the Sheila that had worn that dress was dead.

CHAPTER NINE

A Singeing of Wings

ALL the vitality of Millings—and whatever its deficiencies, the town lacked nothing of the splendor and vigor of its youth—throbbed and stamped and shook the walls of the Town Hall that night. To understand that dance, it is necessary to remember that it took place on a February night with the thermometer at zero and with the ground five feet beneath the surface of the snow. There were men and women, and children too, who had come on skis and in toboggans for twenty miles from distant ranches to do honor to the wedding anniversary of Greely and his wife.

The dance began when the first guests arrived, which on this occasion was at about six o'clock, and went on till the last guest left, at about ten the next morning. In the meantime the Greelys' hospitality provided every variety of refreshment.

When Sheila reached the Town Hall—crowded between Sylvester and joyous Babe in her turquoise blue on the front seat of the Ford, while the back seat was occupied by Girlie in scarlet and Momma in purple velveteen—the dance was well under way. The Hudsons came in upon the tumult of a quadrille. The directions chanted above the din were not very exactly heeded; there was as much confusion as there was mirth. Sheila, standing near Girlie's elbow, felt the exhilaration which youth does feel at the impact of explosive noise and motion, the stamping of feet, the shouting, the loud laughter, the music, the bounding, prancing bodies: savagery in a good humor, childhood again, but without the painful intensity of childhood. Sheila wondered, just as any débutante in a city ballroom wonders, whether she would have partners, whether she would have "a good time." Color came into her face. She forgot everything except the immediate prospect of flattery and rhythmic motion.

Babe pounced upon a young man who was shouldering his way toward Girlie.

"Say, Jim, meet Miss Arundel! Gee! I've been wanting you two to get acquainted!"

Sheila held out her hand to Mr. James Greely, who took it with a surprised and dazzled look.

"Pleased to meet you," he murmured, and the dimple deepened in his ruddy right cheek.

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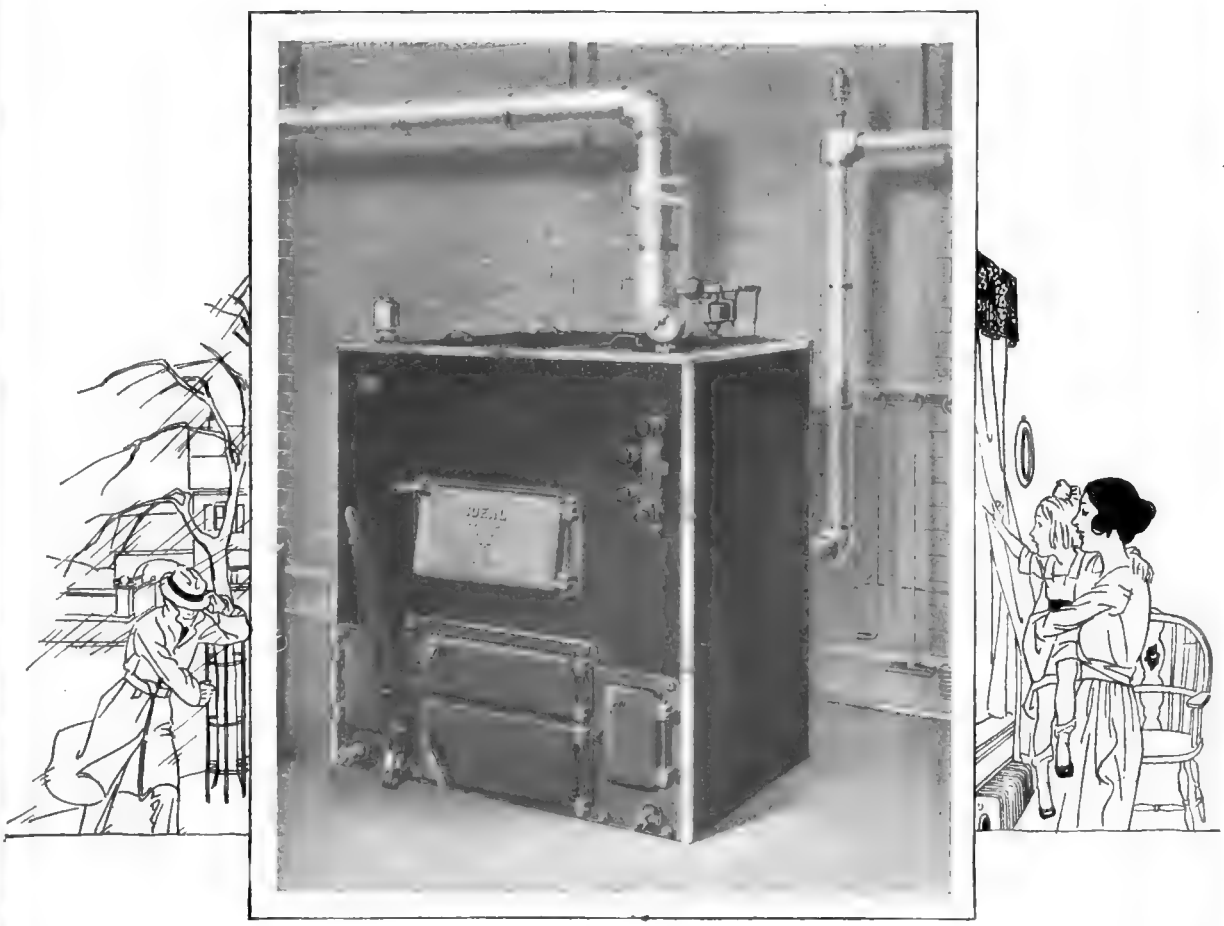

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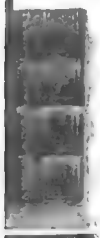
MARK TWAIN



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He turned his blushing face to Girlie. "Gee! You look great!" he said.

She was in fact very beautiful—a long, firm, round body, youthful and strong, sheathed in a skin of cream and roses, lips that looked as though they had been used for nothing but the tranquil eating of ripe fruit, eyes of unfathomable serenity, and hair almost as soft and creamy as her shoulders and her finger-tips. Her beauty was not marred to Jim Greely's eyes by the fact that she was chewing gum. Among animals the only social poise, the only true self-possession and absence of shyness, is shown by the cud-chewing cow. She is diverted from fear and soothed from self-consciousness by having her nervous attention distracted. The smoking man has this release, the knitting woman also. Girlie and Babe had it from the continual labor of their jaws.

EVERY hope and longing and ambition in Girlie's heart centered upon this young man now complimenting her, but as he turned to her she just stood there and looked up at him. Her jaws kept on moving slightly. There was in her eyes the minimum of human intelligence and the maximum of unconscious animal invitation—a blank, defenseless expression of "Here I am. Take me." As Jim Greely expressed the look, "Girlie makes everything easy. She don't give a fellow any discomfort like some of these skittish girls do. She's kind of home-folks at once."

"We can't get into the quadrille now," said Jim, "but you'll give me the next, won't you, Girlie?"

"Sure, Jim," said the unsmiling rosy mouth.

Jim moved uneasily on his patent-leather feet. He shot a sidelong glance at Sheila.

"Say, Miss Arundel, may I have the next after— Meet Mr. Gates," he added spasmodically, as the hand of a gigantic friend crushed his elbow.

Sheila looked up a yard or two of youth, and accepted Mr. Gates's invitation for "the next."

The head at the top of the tower bent itself down to her with a snakelike motion.

"Us fellows," it said, "have been aiming to give you a good time to-night."

Sheila was relieved to find him within hearing. Her smile dawned enchantingly. It had all the inevitability of some sweet natural event.

"That's very good of—you fellows. I didn't know you knew that there was such a person as—as me in Millings."

"You bet you we knew. Here goes the waltz. Do you want to Castle it? I worked in a Yellowstone Park Hotel last summer, and I'm wise on dancing."

Sheila found herself stretched ceiling-ward. She must hold one arm straight in the air, one elbow as high as she could make it go, and she must dance on her very tiptoes. Like every girl whose life has taken her in and out of Continental hotels, she could dance; she had the gift of intuitive rhythm and of yielding to her partner's intentions almost before they were muscularly expressed. Mr. Gates felt that he was dancing with moonlight, only the figure of speech is not his own.

Girlie, in the arms of Jim, spoke to him above her rigid chin. Girlie had the haughty manner of dancing.

"She's not much of a looker, is she, Jim?" But the pain in her heart gave the speech an audible edge.

"She's not much of anything," said Jim, who had not looked like the young man on the magazine cover for several busy years in vain. "She's just a scrap."

But Girlie could not be deceived. Sheila's delicate crystalline beauty pierced her senses like the frosty beauty of a winter star: her dress of white mist, her slender young arms, her long, slim, romantic throat, the finish and polish of her. Girlie told herself again that it was an irregular face, that the chin was not right, that the eyes were not well opened and lacked color, that the nose was odd, defying classification; she knew, in spite of the rigid ignorance of her ideals, that these things mysteriously spelled enchantment.

Sheila was a work of art, something shaped and fashioned through generations, something tinted and polished and retouched by race, something mellowed and restrained, something bred. Girlie did not know why the white tulle frock, absolutely plain, shamed her elaborate red satin with its exaggerated lines. But she *did* know. She did not know why Sheila's subtle beauty was greater than her obvious own. But she *did* know. And so great and bewildering a fear did this knowledge give her, that for an instant it confused her wits.

"She's going back East soon," she said sharply.

"Is she?" Jim's question was indifferent, but from that instant his attention wandered.

When he took the small crushable silken partner into his arms for "the next after," a one-step, he was troubled by a sense of hurry, by that desire to make the most of his opportunity that torments the reader of a "best seller" from the circulating library.

"Say, Miss Arundel," he began, looking down at the smooth, jewel-bright head, "you haven't given Millings a square deal."

Sheila looked at him quizzically.

"You see," went on Jim, "it's winter now."

"Yes, Mr. Greely. It *is* winter."

"And that's not our best season. When summer comes, it's awfully pretty and it's good fun. We have all sorts of larks—us fellows and the girls. You'd like a motor-ride, wouldn't you?"

"Not especially, thank you," said Sheila, who really at times deserved the Western condemnation of "ornery." "I don't like motors. In fact, I hate motors."

JIM swallowed a nervous lump. This girl was not "home-folks." She made him feel awkward and uncouth. He tried to remember that he was Mr. James Greely of the Millings National Bank, and remembering at the same time something that the girl from Cheyenne had said about his smile, he caught Sheila's eye and deliberately made use of his dimple.

"What do you like?" he asked. "If you tell me what you like, I—I'll see that you get it."

"You're very powerful, aren't you? You sound like a fairy godmother."

"You look like a fairy. That's just what you do look like."

"I like horses much better than motors," said Sheila. "I thought the West would be full of adorable little ponies. I thought

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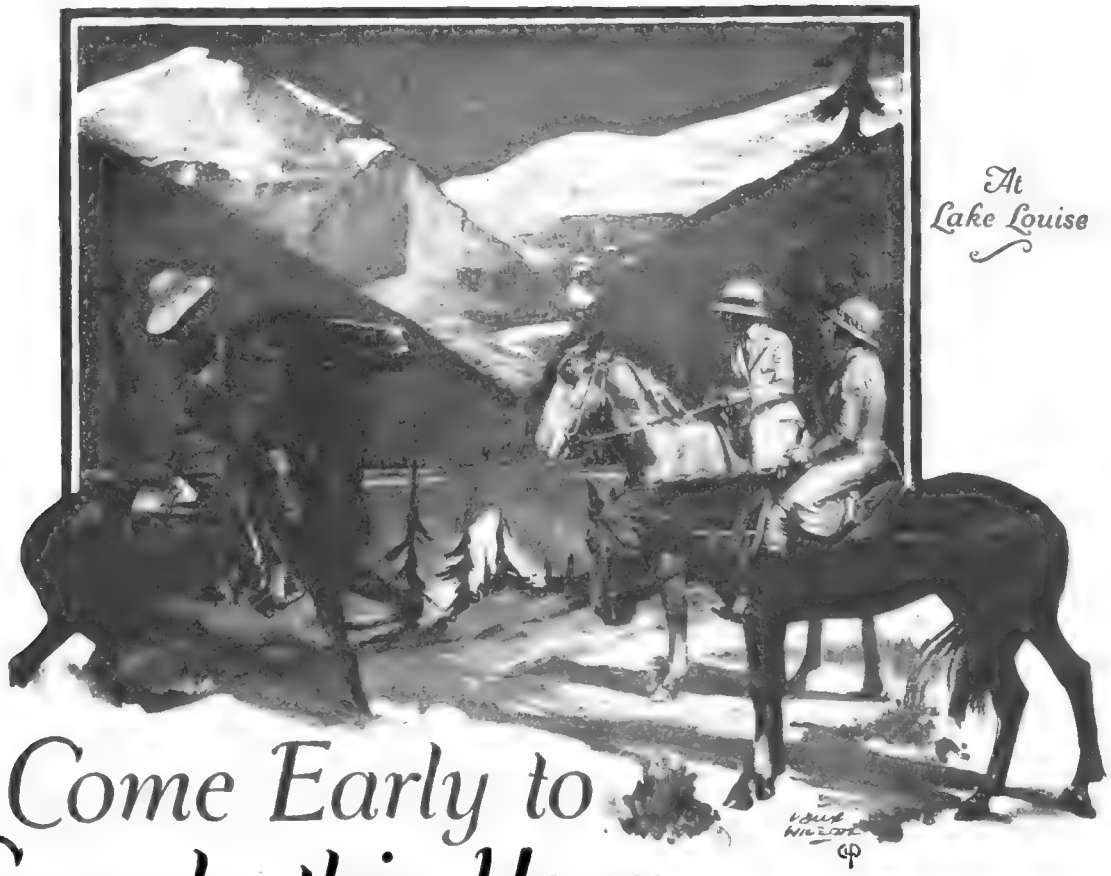

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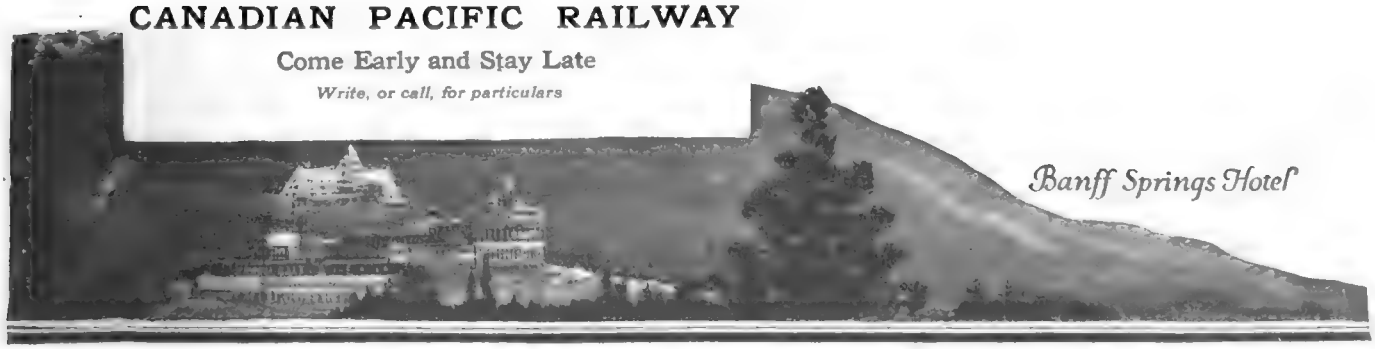

Banff Springs Hotel

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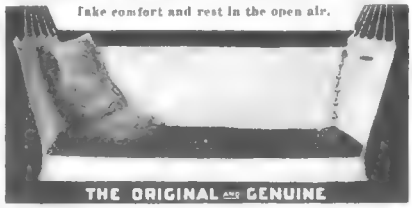

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you'd all ride like wizards, bucking—you know."

"Well, I can ride. But I guess you've been going to the movies or the Wild West shows. This town *must* seem kind of dead after Noo York."

"I hate the movies," said Sheila sweetly.

"Say, it would be easy to get a pony for you as soon as the snow goes. I sold my horse when Dad bought me my Ford."

"Sold him? Sold your own special horse!"

"Well, yes, Miss Arundel. Does that make you think awfully bad of me?"

"Yes. It does. It makes me think *awfully* 'bad' of you. If I had a horse, I'd—I'd tie him to my bedpost at night and feed him on rose-leaves and tie ribbons in his mane."

Jim laughed, delighted at her childishness. It brought back something of his own assurance.

"I don't think Pap Hudson would quite stand for that, would he? Seems to me as if——"

But here his partner stopped short, turned against his arm, and her face shone with a sudden friendly sweetness of surprise.

"There's Dickie!"

She left Jim, she slipped across the floor. Dickie limped toward her. His face was white.

"Dickie! I'm so glad you came. Somehow I didn't expect you to be here. But you're lame! Then you can't dance. What a shame! After Mr. Greely and I have finished this, could you sit one out with me?"

"Yes'm," whispered Dickie.

He was not as inexpressive as it might seem, however. His face—a rather startling face here in this crowded, boisterous room, a face that seemed to have come in out of the night bringing with it a quality of eternal childhood, of quaint, half-forgotten dreams—his face was very expressive. So much so that Sheila, embarrassed, went back almost abruptly to Jim. Her smile was left to bewilder Dickie. This was the first time a woman had stirred that mysterious trouble in his brain.

"IT'S not like a smile at all," thought Dickie, the dancing crowd invisible to him, "it's like something—it's—what is it? It's as if the wind blew it into her face and blew it out again. It doesn't come from anywhere, it doesn't seem to be going anywhere, at least not anywhere a fellow knows." Here he was rudely joggled by a passing elbow and the pain of his ankle brought out a sharp "Damn!" He found a niche to lean in, and he watched Sheila and Jim. He found himself not quite so overwhelmed as usual by admiration of his friend. His mood was even faintly critical. But, as the dance ended, Dickie fell a prey to base anxiety.

How would Poppa take it if he, Dickie, should be seen sitting out a dance with Miss Arundel? Dickie was profoundly afraid of his father. It was a fear that he had never been allowed the leisure to outgrow. Sylvester, with torture of hand and foot and tongue, had fostered it. And Dickie's childhood had lingered painfully upon him. He was afraid of his father, physically and morally; his very nerves quivered under the look of the small brown eyes.

Nevertheless, as Sheila thanked Jim for her waltz, her elbow was touched by a cold finger.

"Here I am," said Dickie.

He had a demure and startled look. "Let's sit it out in the room outside, next to the dancin'-room. But I guess we can hear ourselves speak in there. There's a sort of a bench, kind of a hard one."

Sheila followed and found herself presently in a half-dark place under a row of dangling coats. An iron stove near by glowed with red sides and a round red mouth. It gave a flush to Dickie's pale face. Sheila thought she had never seen such a wistful and untidy lad.

YET poor Dickie at the moment appeared to himself rather a dashing and heroic figure. He had certainly shown courage, and had done his deed with jauntiness. Besides he had on his only good suit of dark-blue serge, very thin serge. It was one that he had bought second-hand from Jim, and he was sure therefore of its perfection.

He thought, too, that he had mastered by the stern use of a wet brush a cowlick which usually disgraced the crown of his head. He hadn't. It had long ago risen to its wispish height.

"Jim dances fine, don't he?" Dickie said. "I kind of wish I liked to dance. Seems like athletic stunts don't appeal to me some way."

"Would you call dancing an athletic stunt?" Sheila leaned back against a coat that smelled strongly of hay and tobacco, and caught up her knees in her two hands so that the small white slippers pointed daintily, clear of the floor.

Dickie looked at them. It seemed to him suddenly that a giant's hand had laid itself upon his heart and turned it backward, as a pilot turns his wheel to change the course of a ship. The contrary movement made him catch his breath. He wanted to put the two white silken feet against his breast, to button them inside his coat, to keep them in his care.

"Ain't it, though?" he managed to say. "Ain't it an athletic stunt?"

"I've always heard it called an accomplishment."

"God!" said Dickie gently. "I'd never a thought of that. I do like skiing, though. Have you tried it, Miss Arundel?"

"No. If I call you Dickie, you might call me Sheila, I think."

Dickie lifted his eyes from the feet. "Sheila," he said.

He was curiously eloquent. Again Sheila felt the confusion that had sent her abruptly back to Jim. She smoothed out the tulle on her knee.

"I think I'd love to ski. Is it awfully hard to learn?"

"No, ma'am. It's just dandy. Especially on a moonlight night, like night before last. And if you'd a had skis on you wouldn't 'a' broke through. You go along so quiet and easy, pushing yourself a little with your pole. There's a kind of a swing to it——"

He stood up and threw his light thin body gracefully into the skier's pose. "See. You slide on one foot then on the other. It's as easy as dreaming, and as still."

"It's like a gondola," suggested Sheila.

Dickie put his head on one side and Sheila explained. She also sang a snatch of a Gondel-lied to show him the motion.

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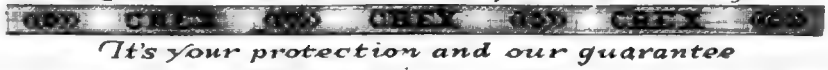

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"Yes'm," said Dickie. "It's like that. It kind of has a—has a——"

"Rhythm?"

"I guess that's the word. So's riding. I like to do the things that have that."

"Well, then, you ought to like dancing."

"Yes'm. May be I would if it wasn't for having to pull a girl round about with me. It kind of takes my mind off the pleasure."

Sheila laughed. Then, "Did you get my note?" she asked.

"Yes'm." Her laughter had embarrassed him, and he had suddenly a hunted look.

"And are you going to be my friend?"

THE sliding of feet on a floor none too smooth, the music, accompanied Dickie's silence. He was silent and sat very still, his hands hanging between his knees, his head bent. He stared at Sheila's feet. His face, what she could see of it, was, even beyond the help of the firelight, pale.

"Why, Dickie, I believe you're going to say no!"

"Some fellows would say yes," Dickie answered. "But I sort of promised not to be your friend. Poppa said I'd kind of dis-gust you. And I figure that I would——"

Sheila hesitated.

"You mean because you—you——?"

"Yes'm."

"Can't you stop?"

He shook his head and gave her a tormented look.

"Oh, Dickie! Of course you can. At your age!"

"Seems like it means more to me than anything else."

"Dickie! Dickie!"

"Yes'm. It kind of takes the awful edge off things."

"What *do* you mean? I don't understand."

"Things are so sort of—sharp to me. I mean—I don't know if I can tell you. I feel like I had to put something between me and—and things. Oh damn! I can't make you see——"

"No," said Sheila, distressed.

"It's always thataway," Dickie went on. "I mean, everything's kind of—too much. I used to run miles when I was a kid. And sometimes now, when I can get out and walk or ski, the feeling goes. But other times—well, ma'am, whisky sort of takes the edge off and lets something kind of slack down that gets sort of screwed up. Oh, I don't know——"

"Did you ever go to a doctor about it?"

Dickie looked up at her and smiled. It was the sweetest smile. So patient of this misunderstanding of hers. "No, ma'am."

"Then you don't care to be my friend enough to—to try——"

"I wouldn't be a good friend to you," said Dickie. And he spoke now almost sullenly. "Because I wouldn't want you to have any other friends. I hate it to see you with any other fellow."

"How absurd!"

"Maybe it is absurd. I guess it seems awful foolish to you." He moved his cracked patent-leather pump in a sort of pattern on the floor. Again he looked up, this time with a freakish, an almost elfin, flicker of his extravagant eyelashes. "There's something I could be real well," he said. "Only, I guess Poppa's got there

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ahead of me. I could be a dandy guardian to you, Sheila."

Again Sheila laughed. But the ringing of her silver coins was not quite true. There was a false note. She shut her eyes involuntarily. She was remembering that instant an hour or two before, when Sylvester's look had held hers to his will. The thought of what she had promised crushed down upon her consciousness with the smothering sudden weight of its reality. She could not tell Dickie. She could not—though this she did not admit—bear that he should know.

"Very well," she said in a hard and weary voice. "Be my guardian. That ought to sober any one. I think I shall need as many guardians as possible. And—here comes your father. I have this dance with him."

Dickie got hurriedly to his feet. "Oh gosh!" said he. He was obviously and vividly a victim of panic. Sheila's small and very expressive face showed a little gleam of amused contempt. "My guardian!" she seemed to mock. To shorten the embarrassment of the moment she stepped quickly into the elder Hudson's arm. He took her hand and began to pump it up and down, keeping time to the music and counting audibly. "One, two, three." To Dickie he gave neither word nor look.

Sheila lifted her chin so that she could smile at Dickie over Pap's shoulder. It was an indulgent and forgiving smile; but, meeting Dickie's look, it went out.

The boy's face was scarlet, his body rigid, his lips tight. The eyes with which he had overcome her smile were the hard eyes of a man. Sheila's contempt had fallen upon him like a flame. In a few dreadful minutes as he stood there it burned up a great part of his childishness.

Sheila went on, dancing like a mist in Hudson's arms. She knew that she had done something to Dickie. But she did not know what it was that she had done.

The next instalment of ***"Hidden Creek"*** *will appear in the June number.*

Riches

By Will Thompson

I CALLED myself a prince, but I am poor;
In worldly goods I have not anything—
No heaps of treasure in my coffers cling,
No bright gem gleams within my open door;
But these alone the riches I've in store—
Hope's miracle, the mystery of spring,
The April rain, the nightingales that sing
Beyond my windowpane, love's mythic lore.

My only gift the gift of song, my wealth
The precious metal of returning health,
My royalty the paths, the ways that fare
Up to the spirit's outer sunny air.
These must I give if you to me should come—
These, and the lacy blossoms of the plum.

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KING CALIBAN'S TOWN

(*Continued from page 14*)

"There must be some place here—unknown to Caliban's men."

"I see."

"But do you know of such a place? Can it be done?"

"Sure—done—but Mister Hazli' no come back!"

"Why do you say that?"

"Caliban men put knife in Mister Hazli'—alle same Marsh Pennima'."

"Not if I have Monte safe."

"Little Looie keep Monte safe to-ni', but no chance come out alive."

"Do your part, Lu—and we can't lose. It's not in the cards."

"Old Chino do his part al' li'," he remarked, "then go way down."

"Take care of Monte and you'll see," the American finished.

The Oriental still took the dismal end.

V

HAZLITT was at sea again in the *Black Magic* as the quiet dusk settled upon the ocean—handling the little craft alone. The widening night was big and strange to his eyes, as if he were once more a little boy. Often he saw the face of Martha Penniman in its blur of white mist. There was a tenderness in his heart back of everything, back of all fears and hopes, and a growing wonder why she had made no sound before being taken from her sleeping-room. A drug might have been insinuated into the room before the entrance of Caliban's natives; she might really have been carried away in sleep, but somehow this did not hold.

He was sorry for Monte, but more and more glad each moment as the possibilities loomed, that he had this power over Caliban — always providing Lu Kik was square. Hazlitt was undertaking now to be as near as possible to Martha Penniman through this night. Vaguely he hoped to help. In any case he would be near. There was no chance for him appearing in Mortuagas in the usual way without it being known presently at the palace. This had been proven many times, because Monte had always found him a few minutes after landing.

The *Black Magic* carried no light. He sailed past the city, past the palace on the cliff, and made a landing rather luckily in the quiet water where the force of the surf was broken by a small rocky headland. Hazlitt laughed softly as he walked back along the shore. The thing he contemplated would have been impossible from any standpoint other than the woman's need. If he hadn't known it before, it was coming very clearly now that he cared a great deal for this English girl.

At least if Martha Penniman were for Monte, in King Caliban's design, Monte was not at home to receive her to-night. Though it seemed days, even weeks, he stopped to verify in his consciousness the immutable fact that she had been taken from his house only last night. This was really the end of her first day in Caliban's keeping. He tried to hold the work at hand down to cold business. Monte as a hostage might give him balance of power; but granting this, Lu Kik's fidelity became the pivot of the whole proceeding. In the South Seas, servants, even Chinese, are not supposed

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to be given to life-and-death fidelity.

The palace wall was not high, but broken glass was cemented in the top. The American worked very carefully not to leave his own blood upon the coping. Within the wall the night air was heavy with jasmine fragrance. He located Monte's tennis-courts by their ashen gleam in the starlight. Most of the low sprawled buildings of Caliban's establishment lay in unbroken darkness. There were oil-flares under the arch of the great gate by the sea road, but the bulk of the mass behind offered no chink of light.

Bitterness rose in him slowly with the hours. He was near, but there was nothing to do. From one forbidding stone structure came the faint sounds of string music, but the windows were closed with metal shutters, rough with rust from the sea winds, and the great door had only a grim frown for such as he. To make himself known, at least other than in emergency, would mean to take from Martha Penniman the influence of his work at large. It might mean his life, to be pounced upon here for a prowler. Caliban wouldn't even deign to explain to the outer world. The music ceased, yet he lingered for hours, until the wolf's tail was in the sky. Even then it was hard to go, harder for the American than it would have been to "start something" in the palace grounds.

He was back in the cockpit of his sailing craft, poling out through the dawn gray, past the little headland. The smell of the mussels on the rocks, now naked in low tide, was briny strong, even revolting, as if the water had been drained off some sick monster that belonged under sea.

Red daybreak was changing the little harbor of Mortuagas as *Black Magic* glided in, innocent as if she had just made the passage across from Mustaree. He went to the Planters' Rest for breakfast, not by any means so hungry as a man should be after a night abroad, but he found something more important than food. Monte Caliban was still missing. His father's men had been searching through the night. A fiery shaft of hope shot through Hazlitt's heart. Could this actually mean that Lu Kik was playing square? Caliban had sent boats to the different nearer islands, the inn-keeper said. Some of the boats had returned, but Monte was not in any. No, all the boats had not been heard from.

HAZLITT was only half through breakfast, and it was not yet eight in the morning, when one of Caliban's house-servants approached his table with a message for him to report at once at the palace.

"But my appointment was not until ten," Hazlitt said.

The servant replied that King Caliban had requested him to bring the American at once.

It was a low dim room of metal and leather. Hazlitt had seen old Caliban before and knew where Monte got his girth. All the vast poundage was soft and sick today. It did not recline; it lay flat. Two baleful black eyes sparkled in the shadows out of a brown face pretty well smoothed out of form by a life of sumptuous food and drink. Caliban had been brought to audience at this unprecedented hour through the great pain of his heart. He spoke through an interpreter.

"Have you seen my son?"

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"I saw him yesterday."

"He went away without speaking to me."

Hazlitt waited. He was wondering if Monte's departure with him in *Black Magic* had really not been noted by any of the islanders.

"Do you know where my son is now?"

"I do not."

Hazlitt risked this because he did not know where Lu Kik had taken the boy.

"Why has not my boat come back from Mustaree?"

"I did not see the chief's boat, nor the party," Hazlitt answered. "I was not in Mustaree last night."

He could not see Caliban's face clearly, but there was a pinched look on the countenance of the interpreter.

"You stayed in Mortuagas last night?"

Hazlitt bowed.

"You fight with Monte yesterday?"

Hazlitt smilingly shook his head.

There were silences and many words before the interpreter delivered this: "Caliban is fond of you because of his son. He says you should take Marsh Penniman's place."

"Thank him for his kindness," Hazlitt said, "but say that my work is with the Asiatic Cordage Company, not with the South Sea open trade."

There was a hoarse growl from Caliban which was interpreted: "It could be arranged."

Now it was suggested that Hazlitt remain in the palace until the boat returned from Mustaree. He wished to know if this were more than a suggestion and observed:

"Just now it would be well for me to perform some tasks down in the city."

He was apparently free, though aware that no movement of his outside the grounds escaped old Caliban's watchers. He had been unable to exercise his initiative in any way during the interview because he was not sure of what the night had brought. There was positively nothing for Hazlitt to do now until the boat returned from Mustaree.

THE forenoon dragged. It was nearly one, and the American was on the water-front when Caliban's craft was spied at sea by better eyes than his. There was no figure of Monte Caliban among the natives in the open boat; yet while it was still at some distance, Hazlitt became sure that some one was lying in the bottom. It was like a conspiracy to keep him from finding the identity of this figure. Runners from the palace pressed close to the boat as it was made fast. There was a bewildering beat of tongues. The crowd prevented him from seeing what they lifted from the bottom, until it was laid feet first upon the stones—the bound figure of little Lu Kik Mon, eyes upon him, rather calm withal. The runners had left for the palace with the word that the chief's son had not been found on Mustaree. Hazlitt stepped forward to the native in charge of the craft.

"Why have you bound my servant? Why have you brought him here?"

The man talked a little English. Lu Kik Mon was in trouble, he said. Lu had acknowledged that Monte Caliban was on the island of Musatree for a time last night, but would not tell how he got there or how he went away.

The eyes of the servant were upon Hazlitt now. He shrugged his shoulders in spite of the bonds, and his lips moved.

"You go 'way. Monte boy come. Say where is friend Hazli'? Hazli' gone 'way. Monte boy no stay. Go 'way, too."

Hazlitt did not dare turn his face to the islander. There was a gleam in his eyes that would have aroused even that sleepy torrid head. Lu Kik had stood square. Not only that, but in a few of his choppy sentences he had permitted his master to know in a pinch just how much he had chosen to tell.

"I do not see yet why you bring my servant here tied in this way," Hazlitt ventured again after a moment.

The islander strove to make him understand that Lu Kik's story was not entirely believed; that no one knew of a boat which the king's son had used to go to Mustaree alone, or with a single boatman; that he and the other natives had found something queer in Lu Kik's story, though Monte Caliban was certainly not on the island of Mustaree, for they had searched. They had thought it best to bring Mr. Hazlitt's Chinese along to be questioned at the palace.

A chill came to the American with that. He didn't like the sound. He would have to stand by the old yellow man who had proved so white as this. And now Lu Kik was reiterating his story, saying over and over the sentences which had entered so directly the understanding of his master the first time. But in the center and through this volley of words, Lu Kik introduced some foreign matter so deftly that even Hazlitt did not quite catch it at once. At least he was not quite sure. Later it became unmistakable—the two words "bear pit," repeated several times in the running jargon of his great affliction.

An open pallet with poles was brought by four natives to carry the body of the Chinese to the palace.

"Be still, Lu," Hazlitt said quietly, "I'll see you through. I'll follow you to the palace. Sit tight, old man."

"Little Looie stick al' li'," came back to his ears.

King Caliban's Town will be concluded in the June number.

I Remembered

By Sara Teasdale

There never was a mood of mine,
Gay or heart-broken, luminous or dull,
But you could ease me of its fever
And give it back to me more beautiful.

In many another soul I broke the bread
And drank the wine and played the happy guest,
But I was lonely, I remembered you—
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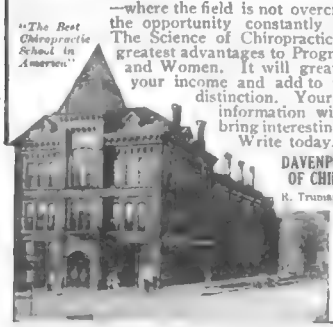

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The STORY of HOOVER

(*Continued from page 22*)

the head of the German Pass-Zentral in Brussels, trying to arrange for a less vexing and delaying method of granting passes for the movements of our men, the German officer said: "Well, now, tell me, Herr Hoover, as man to man, what do you get out of all this? You are not doing all this for nothing, surely?" And a little later, at a dinner at the Great Headquarters to which I had been invited by one of the chief officers of the General Staff, he said to me, as we took our seats: "Well, how's business?" I could only tell him that it was going as well as any business could that made no profits for anybody in it.

It was impressive to see Hoover in the crises. We expected a major crisis once a month and a minor one every week. We were rarely disappointed in our expectations. I may describe, for illustration, such a major crisis, a very major one, which came in August, 1916. The commission had been making a hard fight all summer for two imperatively needed concessions from the Germans. We wanted the General Staff to turn over to us for the civil population a larger proportion of the 1916 native crop of Occupied France than we had had from the 1915 crop. And we wanted some special food for the six hundred thousand French children in addition to the regular program imported from overseas. We sorely needed fresh meat, butter, milk and eggs for them, and we had discovered that Holland would sell us certain quantities of these foods. But we had to have the special permission of both the Allies and Germany to bring them in.

Hoover, working in London, obtained the Allied consent. But the Germans were holding back. I was pressing the General Staff at Great Headquarters at Charleville and von Bissing's government at Brussels. Their reasons for holding back finally appeared. Germany looked on Holland as a storehouse of food which might some time, in some way, despite Allied pressure on the Dutch Government, become available to Germany. Although the French children were suffering terribly, and ceasing all growth and development for lack of the tissue-building foods, the Germans preferred not to let us help them with the Dutch food but to cling to their long chance of sometime getting it for themselves.

Fighting the German General Staff

HOOVER came over to Brussels and, together, we started for Berlin. We discovered von Bissing's chief political adviser, Baron von der Lancken, and his principal assistant, Dr. Rieth, on the same train. These were the two men who, after the armistice, proposed to Hoover by wire through our Rotterdam office to arrange with him for getting food into Germany and received by prompt return wire through the same intermediary:

"Mr. Hoover's personal compliments and request to go to hell. If Mr. Hoover has to deal with Germany for the Allies, it will not be with such a precious pair of scoundrels."

When these gentlemen, who had helped greatly in making our work and life in Belgium very difficult, saw us, they were somewhat confused, but finally told us they were called to Berlin for a great conference on the relief work. When we reached Berlin, we found three important officers from Great Headquarters in the Hotel Adlon.

Two of them we knew well; they had always been fairly friendly to us. The third was General von Sauberzweig, military governor of Brussels at the time of Miss Cavell's execution, and the man of final responsibility for her death. As a result of the excitement in Berlin because of the world-wide indignation over the Cavell affair, he had been removed from Brussels *by promotion* to the Quartermaster-Generalship at Great Headquarters!

Victory

THE Berlin conference of important representatives of all the government departments and the General Staff had been called as a result of the influence of zu Reventlow and the jingoes who wished to break down the Belgian relief. We were not invited; we just happened to be there. We could not attend the conference, but we could work on the outside. We went to Ambassador Gerard for advice. The Allies were pressing the commission to get the concessions on the 1916 native crop. Our effort to get the food for the children was entirely our own affair. Mr. Gerard advised Hoover to rely entirely on the commission's reputation for humanity and neutrality; to keep the position of the Allies wholly out of the discussion. But this was indeed only the confirmation by a wise diplomat of the idea of the situation that Hoover already had.

Most of the conference members were against the relief. At the end of the first session Lancken and one of the Headquarter's officers told us that things were almost certainly going wrong. They advised Hoover to give up. What he did was to work harder. He forced the officials of the Foreign Office and Interior to hear him. He pictured the horrible consequences to the entire population of Belgium and Occupied France of breaking off the relief, and painted vividly what the effect would be on the neutral world, America, Spain, and Holland, in very sight and sound of the catastrophe. He pleaded and reasoned—and won!

It was harder than his earlier struggles with Lloyd George, already entirely well inclined by feelings of humanity, but in each case he had saved the relief. Not only did the conference forbear to destroy the work, but by continued pressure later at Brussels and Great Headquarters we obtained the agreements for an increase of the civilian allotment out of the 1916 French crop and for the importation of some of the Dutch food for the six hundred thousand suffering children.

It was a characteristic Hooverian achievement in the face of imminent disaster.

Hoover and the C. R. B. were in Belgium and France for but one purpose: to feed the people, to save a whole nation from starvation. To them the political aspects of the work were wholly incidental, but they could not be overlooked. With the military advantages and disadvantages about equal, it was the impossibility of France's letting the two and a

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half million people of her own shut up in the occupied territory starve under any circumstances possible to prevent, together with the humanitarian feeling of Great Britain and America, which Hoover, by vivid propaganda, never allowed to cool, and the strength of which he never let the diplomats and army and navy officials lose sight of, that turned the scale and enabled the Commission for Relief in Belgium to continue its work despite all assault and interference.

Over and over again it looked like the end, and none of us, even the sanguine chief, was sure that the next day would not be the last. But the last day did not come until the last day of need had passed, and never from beginning to end did a single commune of all the five thousand of Occupied Belgium and France fail of its daily bread. It was poor bread sometimes, even for war bread, and there were many to-morrows that promised to be breadless, but no one of those to-morrows ever came.

I am constantly asked: What were Hoover's personal duties and work in the relief days? It is a question one can not answer in two words. His was all the responsibility, his the major planning, the resourceful devising of ways out of difficulty, the generalship. But the details were his also. He kept not only in closest touch with every least as well as greatest phase of the work, but took a personal, active part in seeing everything through. Constant conferences with the Allied Foreign Offices and Treasuries, and personal inspection of the young men sent over from America as helpers; swift movements between England and France and Belgium and Germany and America, and trips in the little motor-launch about the harbor at Rotterdam, examining the warehouses and food ships and floating elevators and canal-boats; these were his contrasting activities of day following day through all the months and years of the relief.

Hoover had to make his headquarters in London at the Commission's central office. Here he could keep constantly in touch by cable and post with the offices in New York, Rotterdam and Brussels. The Brussels office was allowed to send and receive German-censored mail three times a week by way of Holland, and we could do a limited amount of censored telegraphing to Rotterdam over the German and Dutch wires and thence to London by English-censored cable. But Hoover came regularly every few weeks to Brussels, taking his chances with mines and careless submarines.

Taking Chances with Mines

THESE were no slight chances. A Dutch line was allowed by England and Germany to run a boat, presumably unmolested, two or three times a week between Flushing and Thamesmouth. These jumpy little boats, which carried passengers only, the hold being filled with closed empty barrels lashed together to act as a float when trouble came, were the only means of bringing our young American relief workers to Belgium and of Mr. Hoover's frequent crossings. After seven of the ten boats belonging to the line had been lost by mines the thrifty Dutch company suspended operation. We had then to cross secretly by English dispatch boats, protected by destroyers and specially hunted by German submarines.

On the occasion of one of Hoover's crossings two German destroyers lying outside of Flushing harbor requested the little Dutch boat to accompany them to Zeebrugge for examination. This happened occasionally and was always exciting for the passengers, especially for the diplomatic couriers, who promptly dropped overboard their letter pouches specially supplied with lead weights and holes to let in the water and thus insure prompt sinking.

As the boat and convoying destroyers drew near to Zeebrugge, shells or bombs began to drop on the water around them. Hoover thought at first they were coming from English destroyers aiming at the Germans. But he could see no English boats. Suddenly an explosion came from the water's surface near the boat and the man standing next to him fell with his face smashed by a bomb fragment. Hoover seized him and dragged him around the deck-house to the other side of the boat. Another bomb burst on that side. He then heard the whir of an airplane and looking up saw several English bombing planes. Their intention was excellent, but their aim uncertain.

Hoover's Freedom in Travel

THE anti-aircraft guns of the German destroyers soon drove them away, and the convoy came into Zeebrugge harbor, where the Dutch boat and passengers were inspected with German thoroughness. On Hoover's identity being revealed by his papers, he was treated with proper courtesy and after several of the passengers had been taken off the boat it was allowed to go on its way to Tilbury.

Hoover enjoyed an extraordinary position in relation to the passport and border regulations of all the countries in and out of which he had to pass in his movements connected with the relief. He was given a freedom in this respect enjoyed by no other man. He moved almost without hindrance and undetained by formalities freely in and out of England, France, Holland, Occupied Belgium and France, and Germany itself, with person and traveling bags unexamined. It was a concrete expression of confidence in his integrity and perfect correctness of behavior that can only be fully understood by those who had to make any movements at all across frontiers in the tense war days.

Governor-General von Bissing once said to me in Brussels, apropos of certain charges that had been brought to him by his intelligence staff of questionable behavior on the part of one of our men in Belgium—charges easily proved to be unfounded:

"I have entire confidence in Mr. Hoover despite my full knowledge of his intimate acquaintance and association with the British and French Government officials and my conviction that his heart is with our enemies."

As a matter of fact, Hoover always went to an unnecessary extreme in the way of ridding himself of every scrap of writing each time he approached the Holland-Belgium frontier. He preached absolute honesty, and gave a continuous personal example of it to all the C. R. B. men inside the steel ring.

The devotion to their chief of these men and of all the others outside in the New York and London and Rotterdam offices was one of the most beautiful among all the beautiful things of the Belgian relief work. Each time he came to Brussels all of us came in from the provinces and Occupied France and gathered about him while he told us the news of the outside world and how things were going in the New York and London offices. And then he would talk to us as a brother in the fraternity and exhort us to forget our difficulties and our irritations and play the game well and honestly for the sake of humanity and the honor of America. After the group talks he would listen to the personal troubles and advise and help each man in his turn.

People sometimes ask me why Hoover has such a strong personal hold on all his helpers. The men of the C. R. B. know why.

The Belgian relief and the American food administration and the later and still continuing American relief of Eastern Europe, have been called, sometimes, in an apparently critical attitude, "one man" organizations. If by that is meant that there was one man in each of them who was looked up to with limitless admiration, relied on with absolute confidence and served with entire devotion by all the other men in them, the attribution is correct. No man in any of these organizations—and Hoover gathered about him the best he could get—but recognized him as the natural leader. He was the "one man," not by virtue of any official or artificial rank, but by sheer personal superiority in both constructive administrative capacity and effective practical action.

The New York and London and Rotterdam offices had their hard-working American staffs and their all-important duties. They were the ones to carry on the great outside campaign, to find the money and buy the food, to keep the overseas fleet of seventy C. R. B. ships always moving, to transship the precious cargoes swiftly at Rotterdam into our five hundred canal-boats, and urge them steadily on through Holland, and across the fatal border into our hands in Belgium, and to do it all safely and regularly and always in time. They had their full part to play; without it there would have been nothing for us to do inside.

He Dislikes Thanks

BUT we were the ones—never more than thirty-five or forty at a time; the Germans wanted to limit us to twenty-five—who really saw Belgian relief in all its pathetic and inspiring details. We were the ones privileged to work side by side with the great native relief organizations with their complex of communal and regional and provincial committees and at their head, the great Comité National, most ably directed by Émile Francqui, whom Hoover had known in China.

Thirty-five thousand organized Belgians gave their volunteer service to their countrymen from beginning to end of the long occupation. And many thousands more were similarly engaged in unofficial capacity. We saw the splendid work of the women of Belgium in their great national organizations, the "Little Bees," the "Drop of Milk," the "Discreet Assistance" and all the rest. My wife, who was inside with us, has tried to tell the story of the women of Belgium in another book, but as she rightly says:

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"The story of Belgium will never be told. That is the word that passes oftenest between us. No one will ever by word of mouth or in writing give it to others in its entirety, or even tell what he himself has seen and felt."

Whenever Hoover came, he tried to keep his presence unknown except to us and Minister Whitlock and the heads of the Belgian organization and the German Government with whom he had to deal. He would not go, if he could help it, to the soup lines and children's canteens. Like many another man of great strength, he is a man of great sensitiveness. He can not see suffering without suffering himself. And he dislikes thanks. The Belgians were often puzzled, sometimes hurt, by his avoidance of their heartfelt expression of gratitude. Mr. Whitlock was always there and had to be always accessible. So they could thank him and thank America through him. But they rarely had opportunity to thank Hoover.

I remember, though, how their ingenuity baffled him once. He had slipped in quietly, as usual, at dusk one evening by our courier automobile from the Dutch border. But some one passed the word around that night. And all the next day, and for the remaining few days of his stay, there went on a silent greeting and thanking of the Commission's chief by thousands and thousands of visiting-cards and messages that drifted like snowflakes through the door of the director's house; engraved cards with warm words of thanks from the nobility and wealthy of Brussels; plainer printed ones from the middle-class folk, and bits of writing-paper with pen or pencil-scrawled sentences on them of gratitude and blessing from the "little people." My wife would heap the day's bringing on a table before him each evening and he would finger them over curiously—and try to smile.

Decorated by the King

WHEN the Armistice had come, the Belgian Government tried to thank him. He would accept no decorations. But once again Belgian ingenuity conquered. One day just after the cessation of the fighting he was visiting the King and Queen at La Panne, in their simple cottage in that little bit of Belgium that the Germans never reached. After luncheon the members of the Cabinet appeared; they had come by motors from Le Havre. And before them all, the King created a new order, without ribbon or button or medal, and made Hoover its only member. He was simply but solemnly ordained "Citizen of the Belgian Nation, and Friend of the Belgian People."

I have spoken only of Belgium. But of the ten million in the occupied regions for whom Hoover waged his fight against starvation, two and a half million were in Occupied France. Over in that territory things were harder both for natives and Americans than in Belgium. Under the rigorous control of a brutal and suspicious operating army both French and Americans worked under the most difficult conditions that could be imposed and yet allow the relief to go on at all.

The French population, too, was an especially helpless one, for all the men of military age and qualifications had gone out as Germans came in. They had time and opportunity to do this; the Belgians had not. Each American was under the special care—and eyes—of a German escort officer.

He could only move with him at his side, could only talk to the French committees with his gray-uniformed companion by his side. He had his meals at the same table, slept in his quarters. The chief representative of the Commission in Occupied France had to live at the Great German Headquarters at Charleville on the Meuse.

I spent an extraordinary four months there. It is all a dream now but it was, at the time, a reality which no imagination could equal: The Kaiser on his frequent visits, the gray-headed chiefs of the terrible great German military machine, the *schneidige* younger officers, and all so confident and insolent and so regardless, in those early days of success, of however much of the world might be against them.

One night my officer said at dinner: "Portugal came in to-day. Will it be the United States to-morrow? Well, come on; it's all the same to us." When the United States did come in, we Americans were no longer at Headquarters, so what my officer said then I do not know. But I am sure that it was not all the same to him.

And so the untellable relief of Belgium and Northeast France went on with its myriad of heart-breaks and heart-thrills following quickly on each other's heels, its highly elaborated system of organization, its successful machinery of control and distribution, and all, all centering and depending primarily on one man's vision and heart and genius.

The Great Chief

HE HAD faithful helpers, capable coadjutors. One can not make comparisons among them, but one of these lieutenants was so long in the work, so effective, so devoted, so regardless of personal sacrifice of means and career and health, that we can mention his name without hesitation as the one to whom, next to the chief, the men of the C. R. B. and the people of Belgium and France turned, and never in vain, for the inspiration that never let hope die.

This is William Babcock Poland, like his chief, an engineer of world-wide experience, who served first as assistant director in Belgium, then as director there, and, finally, after Hoover came to America, to be made its Food Administrator, director, with headquarters in London, for all the work in Europe.

In April, 1917, America entered the war, and Minister Whitlock came out of Belgium with his shepherded flock of American consuls and relief workers, although a small group of C. R. B. men, with the director, Prentis Gray, remained inside for several weeks longer.

In the same month Herbert Hoover heard his next call to war service. For almost immediately after our entrance into the war President Wilson asked him to come to Washington to consult about the food situation. This consultation was the beginning of American food administration.

It did not end Belgian relief for Hoover, for the work had still to go on and did go on through all the rest of the war and even for several months of the Armistice period, with the C. R. B. and its chief still in charge, although Dutch and Spanish neutrals replaced the Americans inside the occupied territory.

But the new call was to place a new duty and responsibility on Hoover's broad shoulders. Responding to it, he arrived in New York on the morning of May 3, 1917, and reached Washington the evening of the same day. On the following day he talked with the President and began planning for the American food administration.

*The next instalment of "**The Story of Hoover,**" in the June number, will tell about his work as United States Food Administrator, and as Director-General of American and Allied Relief in Europe after the Armistice.*

At My Library Window

By Charles Wharton Stork

WITHIN are books, books, books in marshaled rows,
A comely, golden-shielded retinue;
Etchings, pastels, a Japanese print or two;
A wide chair where the senses find repose,
While, vision-starred, the mind adventuring goes
On lone crusades across the chartless blue
To win strange lands—The Good, The Fair, The True—
Cheered by such glamour as the scholar knows.

Outside is dappled lawn, where cherry-trees
Dot the smooth green with tiny drifts of white,
And on the lawn three laughing children play.
These are my two glad kingdoms, and of these
I scarce could tell which gives me most delight.
God make me worthy of them both! I pray.

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Once they were breakfast dainties. Now they are all-day foods. Millions of dishes are served in milk for suppers and between meals.

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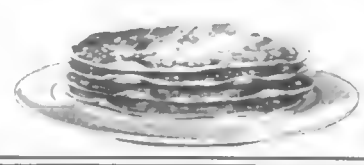

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MARY WOLLASTON

(*Continued from page 77*)

climbed by. Hearing her sing those wonderful songs of his was what had led La Chaise to offer her this opportunity. And Paula didn't know, Mary was sure, of anything that mitigated his disappointment. To her, he was merely one who had tried and pitiably failed. She must, it seemed, have felt sorry about it, and Mary had considerately avoided all reference to him.

Now it appeared that Paula had blankly forgotten all about him. Remembered him only when she wanted him to tune the piano. She callously proposed to exact this service of him. And, if possible, over the telephone!

"I suppose," she said, when she had found her voice, "that I look the way I feel. Paula, you *wouldn't* do that!"

"Why not?" Paula demanded. And then with a laugh: "I wouldn't forget to pay him this time. And it would be nice to see him again too, because I really liked him a lot."

"Well, if you do like him, you wouldn't—would you—want to do anything cruel to him? Anything that he might take as—a wilful insult? Because it could be taken like that, I should think."

She spoke with a good deal of effort. Paula's surprise, the incredulous way she had echoed the word "cruel," the fact that there was still an unshaken good humor in the look of curiosity that she directed upon her stepdaughter, all but overwhelmed Mary with a sudden wave of helpless anger.

What could one do with a selfishness as insolent as that? What was there to say?

PAULA got up, still looking at her in that puzzled sort of way, came over to her chair, sat down on the arm of it and took her by the shoulders.

"You're trembling!" she said. "I expect I am working you too hard. You mustn't let me do that, you know. John will never forgive me if I do. Why, about March, did you mean because I wouldn't sing his opera? He knew all the time I wouldn't unless he could get it right. And he knew he wasn't getting it right. He wanted to give it up long before he did, only I wouldn't let him. But as for being insulted, bless you, he isn't like that. And perhaps if he came I could get him all the pianos out here to keep in tune. There must be dozens!"

At that Mary laughed in a sudden recoil of genuine amusement. She could imagine that Anthony March would laugh himself. In one particular Paula was unquestionably right. He wouldn't feel insulted. He was just the last person in the world to be accessible to a petty emotion like that.

She returned Paula's hug and extricated herself from the chair.

"You needn't worry about me, at all events," she said. "I'm not tired a bit. But could we worry a little about Mr. March? About his opera, I mean. Don't you suppose we could get Mr. LaChaise to put it on? The way he originally wrote it—I mean for somebody else to sing."

"Fournier could sing it in a rather interesting way," Paula remarked speculatively. "Only I don't believe he'd sing in English. Certainly there's nobody else."

"Perhaps if he saw the score—" Mary began.

"Gracious!" Paula broke in, a little

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startled; not much. "I haven't an idea where that score is. I may have sent it back to him, but I don't believe I did."

"No," Mary told her; "it's here. When I closed up the house, I brought it along. He might be interested enough in it, I should think," she persisted, "if you and Mr. LaChaise told him how good it was—to learn it in English. Or it might, I suppose—the whole thing, I mean—be translated into French. There might, anyhow, prove to be something we could do."

"Good Heavens, child!" Paula said. "We're up to the eyes now, all three of us. Will be for weeks as far as that goes. We simply couldn't think of it." Through a yawn, she added: "Not that it wouldn't be a nice thing to do if we had time."

Mary pursued the matter no further with Paula. But she resolved to try to get a little better acquainted with LaChaise. She spoke French as well, if not quite so fluently, as her brother, and she thought the conductor acted as if he liked her. Perhaps if a chance came he might be persuaded to do something.

Paula's notion of getting March to come up and tune her piano was not damped at all by the wet blanket of Mary's objection to it. From town that day, Mary having driven her in for more fittings and photographers, Paula telephoned to the Fullerton Avenue house and later told Mary in an acutely dissatisfied manner that she had got simply nowhere with the person with whom she had talked. "She pretends—oh, it was his sister or his mother, I suppose—that they don't know anything whatever about him. Haven't seen him for ever so long. Haven't an idea how to get word to him. If only I had time to drive out there. But I haven't a minute, of course."

Mary observed that she didn't see what good it would do to be told in person what Paula had just learned over the telephone. She could drive out there herself, of course, if there was any point in it, during the hour when Paula was engaged with Rose Aldrich.

Paula jumped at this suggestion. She was one of those persons whom telephones never quite convince. You never could really find out anything unless you could see the person you were talking to. So Mary, rather glad of the errand—though convinced of its futility so far as Paula's designs were concerned—drove out to the Fullerton Avenue house, and presently found herself in a small neat parlor talking to a neat old lady, who was not, perhaps, as old as she looked, about Anthony March.

FOR anything that bore upon the obtainability of his service for the High Forest piano the telephone conversation would have done as well. His mother had seen him for only a short time a little more than a week ago, and judged from what he then said that he was upon the point of going away, though not for a long absence—a month, perhaps. She had not asked where he meant to go, and he had volunteered nothing. It was possible that he did not know himself.

Mary remained in doubt, for the first five minutes or so of her call, whether the stiff, guarded precision of this was a mark of hostility to the whole Wollaston clan, or whether it was nothing but undiluted New England reserve. She ventured a tentative, "I suppose he didn't say especially why he was going?" and on getting a bare negative in reply, went on a little breathlessly: "I didn't mean that impertinently. Only all of us were very much interested in him and we liked him too well, especially Father and I, to be content to lose track of him. I hope he wasn't ill—didn't go away because of that?"

"He told me that he was not," Mrs. March answered. "Though if I might have had my way with him, I would have put him to bed for a week. However," she added with a fine dry smile, "I never did have my way with him, and neither has his father had his. And I judge it to be as well that we have not."

No, there was no hostility about it. She perceived the genuineness in her visitor's concern and was perhaps—who could tell?—really touched by it. But even so she was sparing of details. Anthony had never lived a life regulated by rule and habit. He worked at his music much too hard when the call, as she termed it, was upon him, and obviously quite forgot to take proper care of himself. And then he went away, as on this occasion, to recuperate in his own manner.

MARY adventured again just as she was getting up to take her leave. "It must want a good courage," she said, "to let him go like that; not to keep trying, at least, to hold him back in sheltered ways."

She got a nod of grim acknowledgment of the truth of this, but no words at all. But she found herself afterward in possession of an impression so clear that one would think it must have needed a long exchange of unreserved confidences to have produced it. The man's mother loved him. Of course one might take that for granted. And was proud of him. Of course—perhaps—again. But beyond all that, she rejoiced in him, in his emancipation from the line and precept which had so tightly confined her, in his very vagabondage.

She was not much in his confidence, though. Mary had made that out from the way she had received her own résumé of the status of his opera. His mother had known nothing of his hopes, neither when Paula raised them up nor later when she cast them down. It was odd about that—and rather pitiable. She would have welcomed her son's confidences, Mary was sure, with so real a sympathy, if he could only have believed it. But the crust of family tradition was too thick, she supposed, to make even the attempt possible.

This failure of his fully to understand the person traditionally the nearest and dearest to him in all the world had upon Mary's mind the effect of somehow solidifying him; making him more completely human to her, where it might have been expected to work the other way. It proved the last touch she needed to quicken the concern she had from the beginning felt for him into an entirely real thing, a motivating principle. If it were possible to get that opera of his produced, she was going to do it.

She stopped at the Dearborn Avenue house on her way down-town to get her little portable typewriter and carry it out to High Forest with her. In the odd hours of the next few days she copied March's libretto in English, triple spaced, out of his score and this, with a lead-pencil, she took to carrying around with her to Paula's rehearsals, to her dressing-room, everywhere. A phrase at a time, syllable by syllable, she began putting it into French.

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On the last Saturday night in June the High Forest season opened with "Tosca" sung in Italian, Paula singing the title-part with Fournier as *Scarpia*. A veteran American tenor, Wilbur Hastings, an old High Forest favorite, sang *Cavaradossi*. Taken as a whole, the performance was quite as good as any one has a right to expect an opening night to be. The big audience, which went away good-naturedly satisfied, had had its moments of really stirring enthusiasm. Fournier scored a well-deserved triumph with a *Scarpia* that was characterized by a touch of really sinister distinction. Hastings, incapable as he was of subtleties or refinements, did as usual all the obvious things pretty well, and got the welcome he had so rightly counted upon. But Paula fell unmistakably short of winning the smashing success she had so ardently hoped for.

She did not, of course, fail. Wallace Hood, to take him for a sample of her admiring friends, went home assuring himself that her success had been all he or any of the rest of them could have wished. And he wrote that same night a letter to John Wollaston, out at Hickory Hill, saying as much. Her beauty, he told John, had been a revelation even to him, and there could be no doubt that the audience had been deeply moved by it. Her acting also had taken him by surprise. It was a talent he had not looked for in her and he was correspondingly delighted by this manifestation of it. In the great scene with *Scarpia*, when he stated the terms of his abominable bargain to her, Wallace had hardly been able to realize that it was Paula that he saw on the stage.

WHEN it came to her singing (he knew John would want his most impartial, honest judgment)—here, where he had been surest of her, she came nearest to disappointing him. It was a shame, of course, to subject a lovely voice like hers to singing in the great vacancy of all outdoors, to say nothing of forcing it into competition with a shouter and bellower like Hastings. But he felt sure that when she was a little better accustomed to her surroundings, she would rise superior even to these drawbacks.

This was somewhere near the facts, though stated with a strong friendly bias. Paula was nervous; never really got into the stride of her acting at all. The strong discrepancy between Fournier's methods and Hastings's served, perhaps, to prevent her getting into step with either. And she sang all but badly. There had been only one rehearsal in the pavilion, and at that she had been content merely to sketch her work in, singing off the top of her voice. When she really opened up at the performance, the acoustics of the place—or perhaps one should say the total absence of all acoustic properties, frightened her into forcing, with the result that she was constantly singing sharp.

Paula herself, though disappointed of course, didn't feel too badly about it, knowing that all her difficulties were merely matters of adjustment, until she read what the critics said about her in the papers the next morning. What they said was not on the face of it severe; came indeed, to much the same thing as Wallace Hood's verdict. But the picture between the lines which they unanimously presented was of a spoiled beauty, restless for the publicity that private life deprived her of, offering in a winning manner to a gullible public a gold brick.

Paula was furiously angry over this, justifiably, too. Her work had been professional, even in its defects, and deserved professional judgment. The case was serious too, for if that notion of her once got fairly planted in the minds of her public, it would be almost impossible to eradicate it.

But Anthony March had not been mistaken when he spoke of her as a potential tamer of wild beasts. Her anger was no mere gush of emotions, to spend itself and leave her exhausted. It was a sort that hardened in an adamantine resolution. The next chance she got, she'd show them! Unluckily she wasn't billed to sing again until toward the end of the week. It happened, however, that the Sunday papers, taking away with one hand, gave, in a roundabout but effective fashion, with the other.

THE opera billed for that night was "Pagliacci." A young American barytone, with a phenomenal high A, was to sing *Tonio* and a new Spanish soprano was cast for *Nedda*. When this young woman saw the Sunday papers, she, too, went into a violent rage. Her knowledge of English was not sufficient to enable her to draw any comfort from the subtle cruelties which the critics had inflicted on Paula in the news section. But the music and drama supplements, which had, of course, been printed days before, devoted as they were to the opening of the High Forest season, simply made Paula the whole thing. Which of course, from a professional newspaper man's point of view, she was. The Spanish young lady's rage was of a different quality from Paula's. She wept and stormed. She demanded, like Herodias, the head of that press-agent on a charger. Simply that and nothing more. And when she failed to get it, she went to bed.

The management, disconcerted, but by no means at the end of its resources, decreed a change of the bill to "Lucia." They were ready to go on with "Lucia," which had been billed for Tuesday night. All they needed was to bring the scenery out from town in a truck. This they ordered done; but at five o'clock, about two miles south of the park, the truck went through a bridge culvert and rolled all the way to the bottom of a ravine. The driver escaped with his life, but the production of "Lucia" was smashed to a thousand bits.

Mary chanced upon this piece of information and brought it straight to Paula. "Tell them to go ahead with 'Pagliacci,' then," Paula said. "I'll sing *Nedda* myself. Get LaChaise on the phone and let me talk to him."

She did sing it without any rehearsal at all. And she gave a performance which for most of the persons who saw it made her the, and the only, *Nedda*, though—or perhaps because—she didn't give the part quite its traditional characterization, adapted it with the unscrupulousness of the artist to her own purpose.

Paula's *Nedda* was a sulky slattern, indifferent, lazy, smoldering with passion, dangerous. The sensuous quality of her beauty had never been more apparent than it was in the soiled cheap mountebank fineries which she had worn for countless performances of the part in Europe. And this beauty, of course, did a lot of the work for her. Explained the tragedy all by itself. And indeed, tragedy hung visibly over her

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from the moment of her first entrance upon the stage in the donkey-cart. She was the sort of woman men kill and are killed for.

She played the part with an extreme economy of movement, with a kind of feline stillness which made her occasional explosions into action, as when she attacked *Tonio* with the whip, literally terrifying. She sang it carelessly, and therefore in a manner absolutely gorgeous. She swept them all, critics as well as the immense audience, clean off their feet.

Also by way of a footnote, the managerial announcement that Madame Carresford had volunteered for the part at six o'clock, to rescue them from the necessity of closing the park, and was to sing it absolutely without rehearsal, exploded for all time the notion that there was anything of the amateur about her.

"You can do anything," LaChaise told her as she came out into the wings. And he kissed her on both cheeks rather solemnly, in the manner of one conferring a decoration. In full measure pressed down and running over, that was how Paula's success came to her.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN
The Wayfarer

BY THE time Paula had got back to her dressing-room after the long series of tumultuous curtain-calls was over, the rush of her friends to express their congratulations in person had begun. After the "Tosca" performance she had been adamant about seeing anybody, but to-night, with a laugh, she said: "I don't care. For a few minutes. If they're people I really know."

So Mary took her station beside the Rhadamanthus at the stockade gate—in a proper opera-house he would have been the stage-doorkeeper—to pick out the sheep from the goat-like herd of the merely curious who, but for firm measures, would have stormed the place. Those who came down again, pushed out by the weight of new arrivals, lingered about the gate talking things over with Mary. It amused her to see how radically their attitude had changed. People like the Averys, the Cravens and the Byrnes, who in a social way had known Paula well, seemed to regard her now as a personage utterly remote, translated into another world altogether. And when they asked about her father, as most of them did, there was an undertone almost of commiseration about their inquiries, though on the surface this didn't go beyond an expressed regret that he hadn't been here to witness the triumph.

She drove them all away at last, even the lingerers in Paula's dressing-room, left her safely in the hands of her dresser, and went out into the automobile park to get her car. Coming up softly across the grass and reaching in to turn on the lights, she was startled to discover that there was a man in it. But before she had time to more than gasp, she recognized him as her father.

"I didn't want to push my way in with the mob," he explained, after apologizing for having frightened her. "The car, when I spotted it, seemed a safe place to wait. And the privacy of it," he added, "will be grateful too, since I'm not perfectly sure that Paula won't refuse outright to see me."

It was a favorite trick of his in talking with Mary to say in jest what he meant a part of in earnest. She smiled at this, and said she hoped he hadn't missed the performance.

"No," he told her somberly, "I didn't miss—any of it." Then on a different note, "Now we'll see whether those dogs of critics won't change their tune."

"Paula herself changed the tune," Mary observed. Then, "She's longing to see you, of course. And there's no reason why you should wait. No one's with her now except her dresser."

She led the way, without giving him a chance to demur, to the gate to the stockade. But there she changed her first intention, which had been to conduct him herself to Paula, and turned him over to the gatekeeper.

"Please take Doctor Wollaston up to his wife's dressing-room," she said. And with a momentary pleasure in having evaded introducing him as Madame Carresford's husband, she turned away and went back to the car.

For the moment the spectacle of her father in the rôle of a young lover touched her no more acutely than with a mild half-humorous melancholy. She even paid the tribute of a passing smile to the queer reversal of their rôles, her own and his. She was more like a mother brooding over the first love-affair of an adolescent son. It was so young of him, younger, she believed, than any act she herself could be capable of, to have come to Paula's performance without letting her know and to have waited shyly alone in the dark while the herd of her acquaintances crowded in and monopolized her. Pathetically young, almost intolerably pathetic, in a man in his middle fifties. She wondered if he had been at High Forest for "Tosca" the night before and gone away without a word.

She had spoken quite without authority in assuring him of Paula's welcome. Paula had not, she thought, spoken of him once, either in connection with her disappointment the night before or with her triumph to-night. Yet that he would get a lover's welcome she had very little doubt. It was his moment, certainly. Paula, left alone up there at last, sated with an overwhelming success, tired, relaxed. . . .

With an effort of will Mary settled herself a little more deeply in the seat behind the wheel and lighted a cigaret. She hated having to wait, having to be found waiting when they came down together. She wished she could just—disappear. It wasn't possible, of course.

IT WAS not very long before they came down. "She says I may stay two days," John told Mary, as they squeezed into their seats in the little roadster. "Then, relentlessly, she's going to turn me out." But his voice was beyond disguise that of a lover who had prospered.

Mary drove them in almost unbroken silence all the way down the ravine road and up through the woods to the house in the village. Then she went on with the car to their garage, which stood in a yard of a neighbor two or three doors away. She rejected with curt good humor her father's offer to help her with this job. It was what she always did by herself, she said, and took a momentary perverse pleasure, which she despised herself for, in the obvious fact that this troubled him.

Back in the cottage living-room, ten

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"What did the teamster see
In old days, driving his heavy loads
From farm to town, over hills and prairies?"

A Vision of BETTER ROADS

WHAT did the teamster see
In old days, driving his heavy loads
From farm to town, over hills and prairies,
Through mud and flood and storm and washout,
By wood-roads and highroads and the great
National Highways from State to State,
His strong horses straining and sweating through
dust or mire—
What did that hardy teamster see
On those long, hard roads behind his laboring team?

Across the years he saw a vision,
Prophetic, happy, haunting and inspired—
A Vision of Better Roads in the days that were to be.
He saw broad, smooth highroads running everywhere
in a vast network over the country,
Roads without dust or mud or weariness or the
constant labor of repair,
Roads pleasant and swift to travel,
Roads clean and safe and paved,
Leading to great cities and friends and business and
on adventurous, delightful journeys,
All over this broad, beautiful land.
He saw himself and his wife going and
returning over these fair highways,
Making trips to town for shopping or pleasure;
He saw his boys and girls going to better schools,
and better satisfied with their home;
He saw an end to dreariness and monotony
and isolation;
He saw his produce carried quickly to market, and
anything he needed brought as quickly
back to his own door;
He saw happiness, comfort and prosperity in that
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The vision of things which his energy and
resourcefulness and courage are today
bringing to pass.

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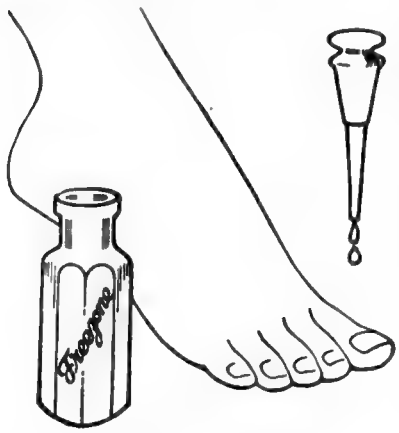

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minutes later perhaps, she found him alone, and heard then the explanation of his having come. They had got the Sunday papers out at Hickory Hill as usual in the middle of the morning, but had found no reference to the performance of "Tosca" the night before. John had spent a good part of the day fretting over the absence of any news as to how Paula's venture had succeeded, and puzzling over the lack of it in the papers. Then the obvious explanation had struck one of them—Rush, he thought, or perhaps Graham—that the papers that came out to Hickory Hill on Sunday were an early edition.

He had had old Pete drive him straight into town at that, and there he had found the news-stand edition containing the criticisms. The unfairness of them had disturbed him greatly. Orders or no orders, he hadn't been able to endure the thought of leaving Paula to suffer under the sting of a sneer like that without making at least an effort to comfort her. He had driven out to High Forest without any idea, of course, that she was to sing again that night; had been told of it at the park, where he had stopped for the purpose of picking up some one who could conduct him to her house. Learning that she was about to sing again, he had exerted all his will power and waited until this second ordeal should be over.

"It was as much of a one for me as it could have been for her," he concluded. "I don't know what stage-fright is, but vicarious stage-fright is the devil. I never was so terrified in my life. I hope nobody I knew saw me. I took pains they shouldn't, for I must have looked like a ghost."

"There's nothing the matter with your looks now," she told him. "Hickory Hill must be just the place for you."

"It would be," he assented, "if it were possible for me to be whole-heartedly there. By the way, we've got a visitor, Anthony March."

She felt herself flush at that with clear pleased surprise. "Oh, that's as nice as possible," she said. "But how in the world did it happen? How did you find him? Paula was trying to and couldn't."

"Was she?" Her father's voice, she thought, flattened a little on the question. "Why, he found us.. He turned up on foot—Friday morning, it must have been—with a knapsack on his shoulders; came to the farmhouse-door and asked if he should tune the piano. Luckily I happened to be about, and caught him before he could get away. He was combining a walking trip, he said, with his own way of earning a living, and I persuaded him to stay for a few days and make us a visit."

THE last part of that sentence Paula, coming down into the room from upstairs, heard.

"Who?" she asked. "Who's the visitor you've been persuading?"

It was just a good-natured way of showing her interest in anything that her husband might happen to be talking about. But when he answered "Anthony March," she came into focus directly.

"Thank goodness, you've found him!" she said. "I had about given him up—and I really need him."

"I thought," said John, "that you had really given him up. Are you going to do his opera after all?"

"Opera!" said Paula, a little blankly, as if she had never heard of such a thing. "No, I want him to see if he can fix this beastly piano they've given me so that it's fit to work with."

And John, after a moment's blank look at her, laughed.

It was a shattering sort of laugh to Mary. She stared at the man who uttered it as if he were what he had for the moment become—a stranger. He was not, certainly, the man who down there in North Carolina had talked about March with her, regretted the "rough justice" he had had from Paula, and considered the possibility of repairing it. That momentary blank look of his had shown that he perceived the insensitive egotism of his wife's attitude. Not even now that her success was an established thing had she a regretful thought for the man who had hoped to share it with her. She had forgotten those hopes. All she remembered now about Anthony March was that he could tune pianos better than any one else.

ALL this Mary's father saw, and yet he laughed. A cruel laugh. He had felt for the moment a recurrence of the old jealousy. In his relief from it, he, a reassured lover, triumphed in the humiliation of one he had supposed his rival.

Mary managed to hide her face from him—superfluously, because he wasn't looking at her—and thought up, desperately, to keep the talk going somehow, a few more questions about how they were getting on at Hickory Hill.

But she went on feeling from moment to moment more horribly in the way, and at last with a simulated yawn, she said she was going to bed. "This—vicarious success is rather tiring," she told her father; "almost as bad as vicarious stage-fright." And then to Paula: "Is there any reason if you're going to keep Father here for two days, why I shouldn't steal a holiday?"

"Go away, do you mean?" Paula asked with a faint flush. "Why—where?"

"I could drive over to Hickory Hill," Mary said, "either by myself in the little car or with Pete in the big one. Whichever you wouldn't rather have here."

"I think that's a capital idea," John said. "Oh, you'd better take the big car with Pete. It would be rather a long drive for you all by yourself in the little one."

That was not the real reason, of course. He wouldn't want a chauffeur under foot while he was honeymooning about with Paula.

Owing to a late start and an errand which at the last moment Paula wanted done in Chicago, it was getting on toward four o'clock when Pete drove Mary up to the loading-platform of the old apple-house at Hickory Hill. The farm Ford was standing there idling in a syncopated manner, and apparently on the point of departure somewhere. Where, was explained a moment later by the emergence of Sylvia Stannard in her conventional farm costume of shirt and breeches with a two-gallon jug in each hand.

"Oh," she said, "then the big car can take Miss Wollaston over to Durham, can't it—so she won't have to ride in the Ford, which she hates? How do you do? I'm awfully glad you've come. We weren't expecting you, were we? Was anybody, I mean?"

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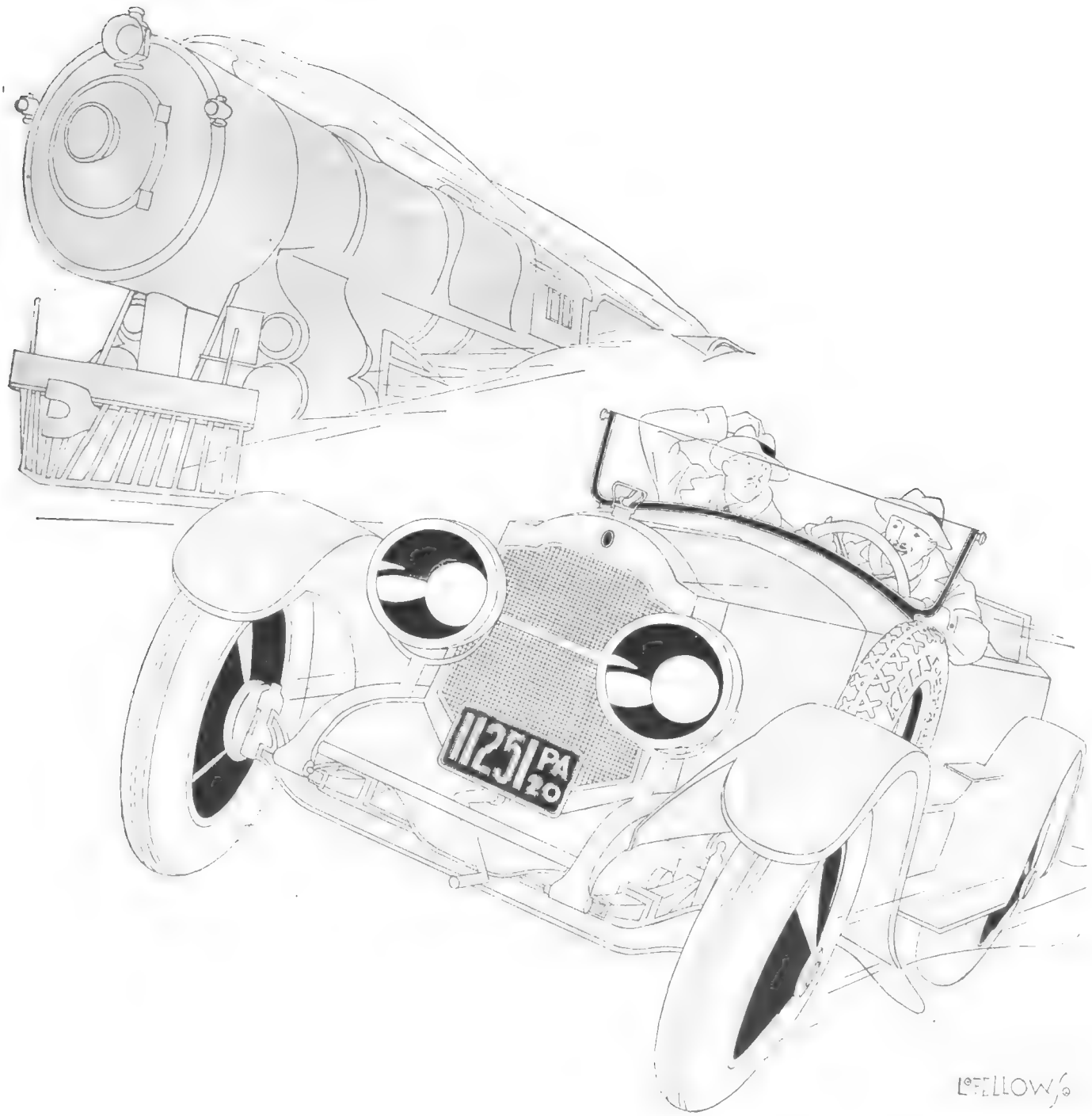

"Suppose one of the tires should blow?"

"Not a chance, my boy; Kelly-Springfields on all around."

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That's just a glimpse of part of the serials, novelettes and short stories in a single number of ADVENTURE—the mid-April

Adventure

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Mary allowed herself a laugh at this young thing with her refreshing way of saying whatever first came into her head, and letting this serve as a greeting, said she was sure the big car and Pete were equal to taking her aunt to the four-miles-distant village.

"That's all right, then. I won't have to wait for her," said Sylvia, letting down her jugs into the tonneau of the Ford. "I'll run straight along with this. They must be simply perishing for it. Isn't it hot, though!"

Mary wanted to know who they were, and what they were perishing for.

"Lemonade," said Sylvia, "for the boys out in the hay-field. It's perfectly gorgeous out there, but hot enough to frizz your hair."

"Where is the hay-field?" Mary asked. "Is it very far?"

"It's just over in the northeast eighty," said Sylvia, with a rather conscious parade of her mastery of bucolic vernacular. "But you don't want to walk. It would be jolly if you would come along with me."

"Wait two minutes until I've said hello to Aunt Lucile and I will," said Mary, and turned to go into the house.

"Don't step on any of the piano," Sylvia called after her. "It's spread all over the place."

THEY had made a good many changes in the apple-house since Mary had gone to High Forest, but the thing that drew a little cry of surprise from her was an old square piano. The case of it stood snugly in the corner of the west wall. But what Sylvia would doubtless have spoken of as the works were spread about the room in a manner which made her warning less far-fetched than it seemed.

The feeling that caught Mary at sight of it was more than just surprise. Its dismantled condition brought to her a half-scared but wholly happy reassurance that Anthony March was really here.

Her journey to Hickory Hill had been, so she had told herself at intervals during the day, merely a flight from High Forest—from her father and Paula. There was no real reason for thinking that she would find March at the end of it. Week-end visits usually ended Monday morning, and it was probable that he would have gone hours before she arrived. She was conscious now of having commanded herself not to be silly when she was fretting over the late start from High Forest and Paula's errand in town. It *would* be nice to see him again! He was probably out in the hay-field with the others.

She gave her aunt a rather absent-minded greeting, and a highly condensed summary of her news. Her father was well, and was stopping on with Paula for a day or two.

"He's taken over my job," she concluded mischievously, "maid, chauffeur and chaperon. Paula doesn't mind, now that she's made such an enormous hit, and she doesn't sing again until Thursday. Pete will take you in the big car to Durham."

"Well, that's Heaven's mercy," exclaimed Miss Wollaston. "I don't like to drive with Sylvia in any car, and I don't like riding in a Ford no matter who drives. But Sylvia driving a Ford—her own car's broken down somehow—is simply frightful."

"She's waiting for me now," said Mary, "to take me out to the hay-field. I must run before she grows any more impatient."

And run was precisely what she did, down the slope to where Sylvia awaited her, a lighter-hearted creature altogether than she had supposed this morning that it was possible for her to be.

She got an explanation of the piano from Sylvia. She had gone with Rush and Mr. March to an auction sale late Saturday afternoon at a farm three or four miles away. Just for a lark. They hadn't meant seriously to buy anything. But this old piano, Mr. March having sworn that he would make it play despite the fact that half the keys wouldn't go down at all and the rest, when they did, made only the most awful noises, they had bought for twenty-six dollars, and had fetched home in the truck on Sunday.

"I think he's terribly nice," Sylvia confided. "You know him, don't you? He's quite old, of course—well, over thirty, he says; but he's awfully—don't you know—well preserved. There are a whole lot of things he can do."

"Over thirty?" Mary inquired. "That is remarkable. How old are you, you nice young thing? Going on six? Look out! You'll smash the lemonade!"

"We're going to surprise them," Sylvia announced when they had arrived, miraculously without disaster, at the northeast eighty. They had careened through the wagon-gate and halted under an oak tree at the edge of the field. "I'll go and tell them I've brought the lemonade, but I won't say anything about you. You keep out of sight behind the tree. Then Graham won't want to go and brush his hair."

IT STARTLED Mary to realize that she had forgotten all about Graham. Not even the sight of his sister had recalled the highly special nature of the state of things between them nor suggested the need for preparing an attitude to greet him with. At all events, she wouldn't follow Sylvia's suggestion and pop out at him from behind a tree.

He was, it happened, the first person the child encountered in her flight across the field; the others, indistinguishable at that distance, were in a group a little farther away. Mary walked out to meet him when she saw him coming toward her, and competently gave the encounter between them its tone by beginning to talk to him—about how hot it was and how nice the hay smelled and how good it seemed to be back here at Hickory Hill—while they were still a good twenty paces apart. You couldn't strike any sort of sentimental note very well when you had to begin at a shout. Then she led him back to the lemonade, gave him a cigaret, and answered at length and with a good deal of spontaneous vivacity his obligatory questions about Paula and the opening of the High Forest season.

She was in the full tide of this—and was, since she had sat down upon a small boulder Graham had insisted she take possession of, screened by the trunk of the tree—when Sylvia hailed her brother from not very far away with the statement that Rush wouldn't stop for anything or anybody until once more around the field. It was March, then, who was audibly coming along with her. Mary rose, broke off

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about Paula, and moved the single step it needed to give her sight of him..

She saw nothing else but him. She saw his head go back, as from the actual impact of her. She saw the look, unmistakable as a blast from a trumpet, that flamed into his face. And then her world swam. Paula wasn't singing now—"Hither, my love! Here I am! Here!" Nor could Paula come upon him now from anywhere and take him by the shoulders and kiss his cheek and lead him away with her. This moment was not Paula's—whatever the other had been.

And these others, standing here looking on, hadn't seen the bolt fall! They were talking as idly and easily as if this were nothing but a hot summer afternoon in the hay-field.

"I told him," she heard Sylvia saying, "that there was another nice old person he knew here with the lemonade, who thought I was only about six. Were you surprised when you saw who she was?—I'm going to take him back to the apple-house with us, now that Mary's come, so that he can have the piano ready to dance by to-night." This last, apparently, to Graham.

She even heard herself join in—the voice was hers anyhow—when Graham, commenting upon the view across the field, remarked that it was so intensely farm-like that it had almost the look of a stage setting.

"It is like something," she said then. "It's like the first act of 'Le Chemineau.' We ought to have a keg of cider instead of two jugs of lemonade, and we should have brought it in a wheelbarrow instead of in the Ford."

"Well, we couldn't take Mr. March back in a wheelbarrow," Sylvia said, "so I'm glad it isn't the first act of whatever-you-call-it. Because he's simply got to fix the piano well enough for jazz."

MARY couldn't remember that he spoke a word, but he got into the back seat of the Ford with her when Sylvia slid under the wheel.

"If you'll promise," Sylvia said to March at the end of the breathless mile back to the apple-house, "if you'll promise to go straight to work at it and never stop until it'll play the 'Livery Stable Blues,' then I'll go back to the hay-field and see that Rush gets some of the lemonade before those laborers drink it all up. You'll see to him, won't you, Mary? Stand right over him like a Latin mistress and be severe, so that we can dance to-night. You aren't as excited about it as you ought to be. I think I'll come in and start him."

And this she did while the Ford executed a little jazz rhythm of its own outside. She didn't stay more than a minute or two, though. When she saw him fairly occupied, tools in hand, over his task, she darted away with a last injunction to severity upon Mary.

She had seen nothing. The two were left alone.

Mary sat where she could watch his fine skilled hands at work. The negligent precision with which they accomplished their varied tasks occupied her, made it possible to continue for a while the silence she needed, until her world should have stopped swimming; until the blindness of that revelation should have passed.

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She had been wrong about him again. He was not an Olympian. (But of course Olympians themselves weren't, if it came to that; not always.) He could never, she had been telling herself since that day when they had their one talk together, belong to any one. He did not save himself up for special people. He was just there, the same for everybody, like, as she had half humorously observed to her father, a public drinking-fountain.

If that were the rule, she, Mary Wollaston, with no gift but one, was the exception to it. Not Paula with her opulent armory, but she, who had listened with him, clinging to him, while Paula sang; she, who had talked to him while Paula fought for her husband's life; she, whom he had come upon in the shade of the oak-tree at the edge of the hay-field; she, who sat near him, silent, now. This was the meager total that outweighed those uncounted hours of Paula's. Somehow she had acquired a special significance for him.

Was she trying to evade saying that he had fallen in love with her? What was the good—except that it sounded sweet—of using a phrase which could be packed like a handbag with anything you chose to put into it? Graham was in love with her. That boy in New York, whom she had found in a panic of lonely terror lest in the great ordeal he was facing overseas he should prove a coward, had been for a few hours in love with her. What would be the content of the phrase for a man like this?

Was she in love with him? Her thoughts up to now had been deep, submerged, almost formless, but this question came to the surface and touched her lips with a smile. Well, and what did the phrase mean to her?

ALL she could think of, as she sat so still watching him, was those fine hands of his, working as skilfully and swiftly as her father's ever worked, but at this humble task. She kept her eyes away for just a little longer from his face. They told so much themselves. She wanted those hands. She wanted them with an intensity that made it impossible at last to let the silence endure any longer.

"Paula—" she said, and stopped in sheer surprise that her voice had come at all; then began again, "Paula wanted you to tune her piano. At High Forest. I was angry at that, until she reminded me that you wouldn't be."

His hand laid down the small odd-shaped tool it held, but the next moment picked it up again.

"I shouldn't have minded tuning her piano," he told her.

"I know," she said. "I knew as soon as I had had a minute in which to—gather you up. And when I had done that, I helped her try to find you. I had a special reason, a different one from Paula's, for hoping that we could. And for my reason," she went on, trembling a little and finding it harder to make her words come steadily, "it isn't—yet—too late.

"You see, if you were there with her where she could see you every day—there'd be a lot of pianos there, she said; enough to keep you going—she'd remember you again. She is like that. Lots of people are, I suppose. When she doesn't see you, she forgets. But if she remembered how much she liked you and how good your

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opera was—the real one, the one you wrote for yourself—she might do something about it—to get it played—so that you could hear it. Now that she's had a great success she could do almost anything quite easily, I think. Infinitely more than I. I've been trying, but I haven't got very far."

He laid down the tool once more and locked his hands together. "You have been trying?" he repeated. The tension, like the grip of his hands, was drawing up almost unbearably.

"There's a French baritone there, Fournier, who could play your officer's part as you meant it to be played, I think. But he doesn't sing in English. I thought it might be possible, if you didn't mind its being sung in French, to translate it. That's one of the things I've been—trying to do."

And then with a gasp and a sob—"Oh, don't—don't hurt them like that!" she reached out and took the hands she wanted.

His met them, as before, so quickly that one could hardly have known where the caress began; only Mary did know. She looked up then into his face steadily, open-eyed, though she could not see much for the blur.

"This time—" he said laboriously—"this time it isn't the song."

She shook her head.

"I couldn't have waited like that," he told her, three breaths later, "except for being afraid that if I tried to touch you, you wouldn't be there at all. Like a fairy-story, or a dream. I have never been altogether sure that the other time wasn't."

"It's real enough," she said. "You're sure now, aren't you?"

His answer, the one she meant him to make, was to draw her up into a deep embrace, his lips upon hers.

"What does it mean?" he asked, when they had drawn back from it a little.

She smiled at that. "You don't need to ask. That's the Wollaston trick, to ask for meanings and reasons." She added, a moment later, "It means whatever it says to your heart."

IT WAS at her half-humorous suggestion that he went back, presently, to work at the piano. She settled contentedly near, where with an outstretched hand she could occasionally respond to his touch. They hadn't, either of them, very much to say.

Once the work was interrupted, when he asked, rather tensely, "Do you want me to come to High Forest?"

She found herself unexpectedly at a loss for a categorical reply. She'd have thought that a whole-hearted yes would have been the only thing she could say.

"I don't want you—tortured any more with unheard melodies," she answered after a moment's reflection.

His nod, decisive as it was, struck her as equivocal. But she was too happy to probe into anything this afternoon. There would be plenty of time; unstinted hours. It was with no more than a mild regret that she heard, under the windows, the return of the big car with Aunt Lucile. This inextinguishable happiness expressed itself in the impudent mischief with which she slipped up close behind Anthony March, and in the last possible instant before her aunt's entrance into the room bent down and kissed him; then flashed back to her decorously distant chair.

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It was funny how calm she was. This day that was closing down over the hill behind the apple-house couldn't be, it seemed, the same that had dawned over the lake at High Forest. The whole High Forest episode, even as she told Lucile and March about it, seemed remote, like something out of a book; but became for that very reason rather pleasant to dwell upon. Sylvia came in pretty soon for a critical survey of what March had accomplished with the piano, volunteered to help, and attempted to. But having pied some of Anthony's arrangements of loose parts, she was sacked off the job and sent back to the hay-field to bring the boys in for supper.

After supper the excitement over the piano increased. They all gathered round March like people watching a conjurer's trick when he slid the action into place, and proved chromatically that every hammer would strike and every key return.

"BUT it isn't tuned at all," Sylvia wailed. "It will be hours before you can play a tune on it."

"Minutes," March corrected with a grin. And they watched, amazed, but less so really than an ordinary piano-tuner would have been, at the way he caught octaves, fifths and fourths, sixths and thirds, up and down that keyboard like a juggler keeping seven tennis-balls in the air.

"There you are!" he said suddenly, before it seemed that he could be half-way through, and began playing a dance-tune.

"But can you play *tunes?*" cried Sylvia. "I thought you only did terribly high brow things. That's what Rush said."

"I was pianist to the best jazz orchestra in Bordeaux," March told her.

He stayed there at the piano quite contentedly for more than an hour. Some of the musical jokes he indulged in (his sense of humor expressed itself more easily and impudently in musical terms than in any other) were rather over his auditors' heads—parodies whose originals they failed to recognize, experiments in the whole-tone scale that would have interested disciples of Debussy; but his rhythms they understood and recognized as faultless.

And Mary danced. With Graham when she must, with Rush when she could. The latter happened oftener than you would have supposed.

"Those Wollastons can certainly dance," Sylvia remarked to her brother. "I wonder they'll have anything to do with either of us. Let's just watch them for a minute. Here, we'll turn the piano around, so Mr. March can see too."

It was queer, Mary reflected, how easy it was for her, and also, she was sure, for her lover, to acquiesce in a spending of the hours like that; how little impatient she was of the presence of these others that kept them apart. She gave no thought to any maneuver, practicable or fantastic, for stealing away with him, not even when, as the party broke up for the night, it became evident that chance was not going so to favor them.

There was something, though (she realized afterward that there had been something), factitious about her tranquillity. What he had said in the moment before their first embrace had been on that same note. He had been afraid to touch her for fear that—as in a fairy-story or a dream—

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she wouldn't be there. All that afternoon and evening, despite an ineffable security in their miracle, she had walked softly and so far as the future was concerned avoided trying to look.

Something in his look when he said good night to her gave her a momentary foreboding, though she told herself on the way to the tent she was to share with Sylvia, that this was nothing but the scare that always came along with a too complete happiness.

BUT in the morning when her aunt told her that March had gone she realized that it had been more than that.

It was in the presence of the others who had gathered in the apple-house for breakfast that she heard the news, and this was perhaps a mercy; for the effort she had to make to keep from betraying herself rallied her forces and prevented a rout.

To the others his having gone like that seemed natural enough—likably characteristic of him, at any rate. In his note to Miss Wollaston he had merely said that he realized that he must be off, and wished to make the most of the cool of the morning. He hoped she would understand and pardon his not having spoken of this intention last night.

"It's the crush Sylvia had on him that accounts for that," Graham observed. "He was afraid of the row she'd make if he let on."

Sylvia's *riposte* to this was the speculation that Mary had scared him away, but one could see that her brother's explanation pleased her.

"Anyhow," she concluded, "he was good while he lasted."

What held Mary together was the obvious fact that none of them saw—no more than they had seen—anything. Not one curious or questioning glance was turned her way. A sense she was not until later able to find words for, that she was guarding something his quite as much as her own from profaning eyes, gave her the resolution it needed to carry on like that until she could be alone naturally—or at all events plausibly—alone. She wouldn't run away from anybody.

Toward eleven o'clock chance befriended her. She hid herself in the mazes of the old orchard, lay down prone upon the warm grass, her cheek upon her folded forearms, and let herself go. She did not cry even now. Grief was not what she felt, still less resentment.

She was lonely as she had never been before, and frightened by her loneliness. All the familiar things of her life seemed far away, unreal. She wanted a hand to hold—his—oh, one of his!—until she could find her way into a path again.

She had known, she reflected—somewhere in the depths of her she had known—from the first moment of their meeting, that he would go away. This was why she had been so careful not to look beyond the moments as they came; not to tempt Nemesis by asking nor trying for too much.

There happened to be, rather uncannily, a genuine proof that this was true. While she had been still dazed with that first look of his, there in the oak shade at the edge of the field, she had said that it was like the first act of "Le Chemineau." That had been speaking all but with the tongue

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of prophecy. Deeply as the story had impressed her when she heard it, she had spoken with no conscious sense of the likeness between that wayfarer—whom neither love nor interest nor security could tempt away from the open road which called him—and Anthony March. It was an inner self that knew and found a chance to speak. It was that same self who had answered for her when he asked whether she wanted him to come to High Forest.

He had come to his decision then, with just that nod of the head. And she, forlorn, was glad he had cast this temptation aside; that he was plodding now sturdily along his highway. She flushed with shame at the thought of him, ubiquitous among those egotists at High Forest, enlisting their interest, reminding Paula how much she liked him.

Why had he not hated her for suggesting such a thing? He had loved her for it, she knew, because he understood the longing to comfort and protect him which lay behind it. But that sort of comfort was not for him. The torture of the unheard melodies instead.

He did love her. This, utterly, she knew. His going away, even with no farewell at all, cast no flaw upon the miraculous certainty of that. Their one unreserved embrace remained the symbol of it.

She pressed her hands to her face, and with a long indrawn breath surrendered to the memory of it. It was hers—for always.

The family were sitting at dinner when she came down to the apple-house, and after a rather startled look at her, demanded to know where she had been.

"Asleep in the orchard," she said. "And not altogether awake yet."

But she knew she must get away from them. The look she saw in Graham's face would have decided that.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

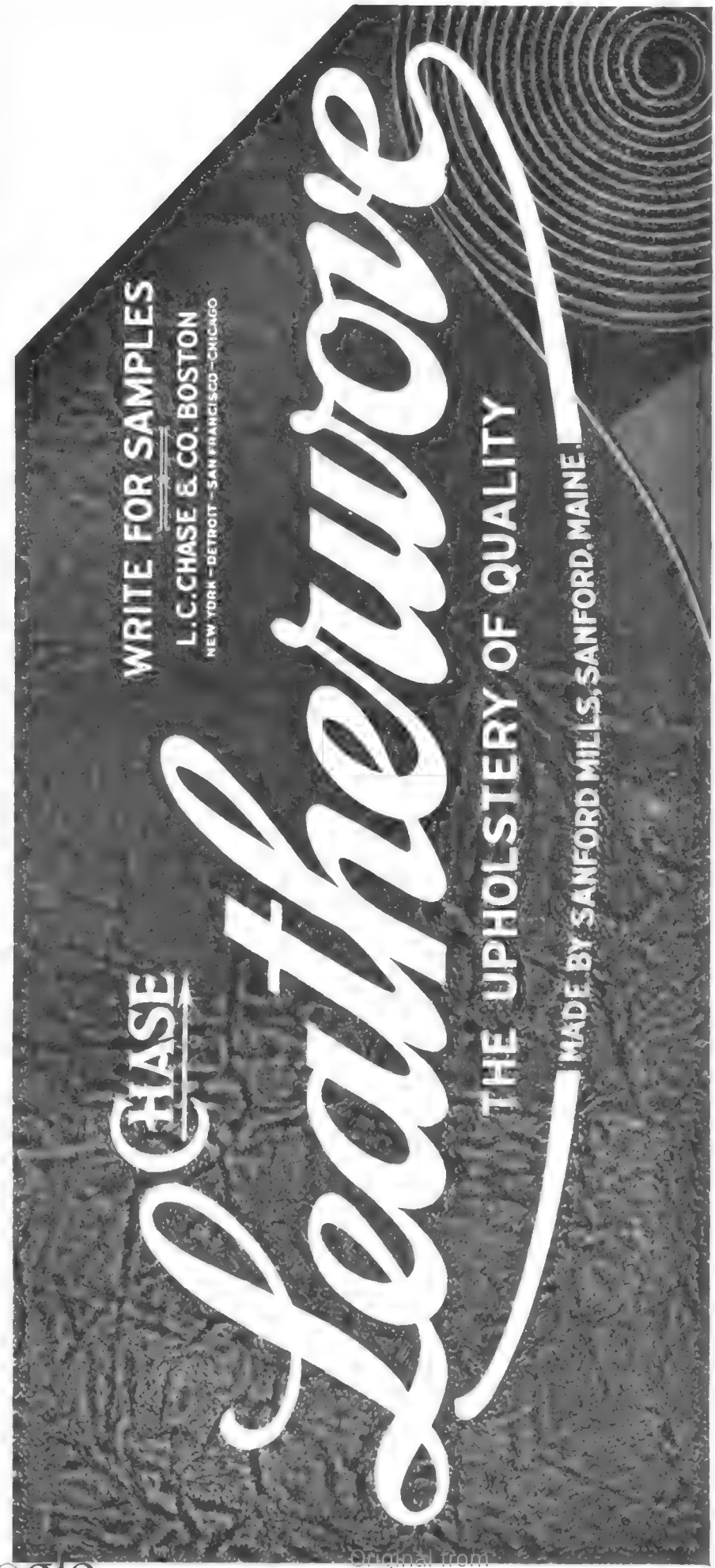
A Case of Necessity

SHE told Rush when they left the table that she had some shopping to do in town for Paula, and meant to go on the afternoon train. She was expected back at High Forest to-morrow anyhow. Beyond trying to persuade her to let Pete drive her in, he made no protest, but she could see that he was troubled about it (March, though, was the last person he knew whom he would have connected with the matter) and she wasn't much surprised to find Wallace Hood waiting on the station platform when her train got in.

She didn't very much mind Wallace. There was, of course, no appearance of his being there in the rôle of guardian because she wasn't considered safe to leave to herself. You could always trust Wallace to do a thing like that perfectly.

It was a great piece of luck for him. He had called up Hickory Hill to congratulate John upon Paula's enormous success, and had learned from Rush of Mary's visit and that she was even then on the way to Chicago. He had just dropped round at the station in the hope of being able to pick her up for dinner. She had some shopping to do, he understood, and he wouldn't detain her now.

"Oh, nothing that matters a bit," said Mary. "It was an excuse merely for running away from Hickory Hill."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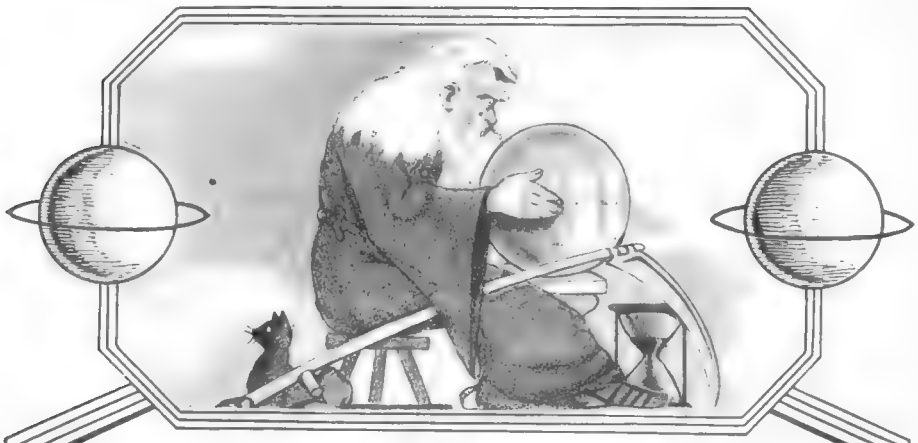

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There was something to be said for a man like Wallace as a confidant. He was perfectly safe not to guess anything on his own account. He seemed touched by her candor, and hugged her arm up against his side as they walked along, a gesture of endearment such as he hadn't indulged in for half a dozen years.

"So if you have nothing better to do," she went on, "we can begin our evening now. Though I suppose I had better find first a place to sleep."

"Frederica Whitney's in town for a day or two, just for a flying visit to Martin. She'd be glad to take you in, I'm sure."

"Oh, I think not," said Mary. "Not if I can get anything with four walls at the Blackstone."

She thought from his glance at her that he attached some special significance to her unwillingness to go to the Whitney house, and hastened to assure him this was not the case.

"Frederica's a dear, only I just happen to feel like not being anybody's guest tonight. Oh, and I didn't mean you by that, either."

"It's nice to be nobody in that sense," he said.

His next suggestion was that he get his car, start north up the shore with her, have dinner at one of the taverns along the road, and deliver her in good season for a night's sleep in the cottage at High Forest.

"To-morrow is as soon as I want to go there," she said. "Pete's going over then to get Father, so I shall go on duty. But meanwhile I'll let him enjoy his holiday in peace."

HE MADE no further demur to telephoning over to the Blackstone.

On his coming back presently with the news that he had been lucky enough to get a room for her, he said: "Then we've nothing on our minds, have we? Except finding a place for dinner that's quiet and not too romantic. Oh, that doesn't mean I'm afraid of you. I *am* glad you came to meet me."

She was quite sincere about this. It would have been ghastly, she reflected, to have spent the evening alone in a hotel bedroom with her own thoughts, if those she had entertained on the train coming in were a fair sample.

He was being just as nice to her as possible. By his old-fashioned standards, no hotel was a proper place for a young girl (and he, of course, classed Mary as such) to spend a night in alone. Yet beyond offering two alternative suggestions, he forebore trying to dissuade her. So when he chose the Saddle and Cycle as their anchorage for the evening, she indorsed his choice with the best appearance of enthusiasm she could muster, though she'd rather have gone to a place where three out of four of the other diners wouldn't in all probability be known to her.

Arriving, however, in the unclassified hour between tea and dinner, they found they had the place pretty much to themselves, and settled down in a secluded angle of the veranda for a leisurely visit. They began on Paula, of course, her retrieved failure and her sensational success. How sorry Wallace was not to have been there for her *Nedda*. (He didn't go in much for Sunday entertainments of any sort, Mary remembered, and of course he had no idea that Paula was going to sing.) Well, it

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had been just as splendid as everybody said it was. That was one thing, at any rate, that had been put beyond discussion. Even the pundits were, for the moment anyhow, silenced.

He was curious as to how the intimate details of this strange life she had a chance to observe, struck her. How she liked Paula's colleagues; to what extent the glamour evaporated when one was behind the scenes.

She satisfied him as well as she could, though her opportunities, she said, were a good deal narrower than he took them to be. She had herself so much to do as Paula's factotum that there wasn't much leisure for loafing about. And this launched her into a humorously exaggerated account of what was involved in being secretary, chauffeur and chaperon to a successful opera star. But she pulled up when she saw he was taking it seriously.

"It's shocking she should work you like that," he said in a burst of undisguised indignation. "Of course, it's precisely what Paula would do. She has very little common consideration, I'm afraid, for anybody."

Mary could not remember having heard him speak like that in all the years she'd known him, of anybody; she was sure he never had so spoken of any one who bore the name of Wollaston. Taken aback as she was, she changed her tune altogether and tried to reassure him.

"But that's what I'm there for, Wallace dear;' to be worked. And you've no idea how I like it—like having something to do, I mean, which amounts, in a small way, to a job."

"It's too hard for you, though," he persisted. "It isn't what you were trained for. And it's rather, as I said, shocking. If it was all understood from the first, then so much the worse for the understanding. I hope your father, when he went up there, didn't discover what your duties were supposed to be."

"No," Mary said rather dryly, "I don't believe he did."

"Well," he said thoughtfully at the end of a short silence, "I am profoundly thankful that she's made so—solid a success."

UP TO this moment none of their talk had been quite real to Mary. She had betrayed no inattention to him, and when it had come her turn to carry on the conversational stream she had done so adequately and even with a certain vivacity. But it meant no more than an occupation; something that passed the time and held her potential thoughts at bay.

This last observation of his, though, struck a different note. He had done full justice to his pleasure in Paula's success at the very beginning of their talk. Now he meant something by it. Leaning forward a little for a keener look at him, she asked what it was that he meant.

He was a little surprised to be brought to book like that, but he made hardly an effort to fence with her. "I was glad, I meant, for purely non-sentimental reasons. Her success may prove, I suppose, a practical solution of some difficulties."

"Practical?" she echoed, paling a little. "You don't mean—yes, I suppose you do mean—money difficulties. Do you mean that Paula's going to be invited to support the family now?" She finished with a

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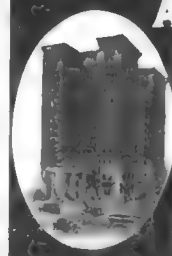

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little laugh, and he winced at it. "Father said something like that to me one day while I was down South with him," she explained. "Only he said it as a joke—a sort of joke. That's why I laughed."

"He talked to you then about his affairs?" Wallace asked. "May I— Do you mind telling me what he said?"

"Of course not, if I can remember. He'd been remiss, he said, about making money. He said that if he had died then when he was so ill, there wouldn't have been, beyond his life-insurance, which was for Paula, much more than enough to pay his debts. Practically nothing for Rush and me is what that came to. I pointed out to him that we could take care of ourselves, and he said that anyway as soon as he could get back into practice, he'd begin to make a lot of money and save. It must be a good deal worse—the whole situation, I mean—than I took it to be—for you to mean that seriously about Paula."

SHE had managed an appearance of composure, but in truth she was badly shaken. Money matters were just about the one real taboo that she respected, and to break over this habitual reticence, even with an old friend like Wallace, troubled her delicacy. She had been brought up by an indulgent father who had always been, so far as her needs went, rich. The notion she got from the look in Wallace's face that there was something really dubious about her father's solvency, was simply terrifying. She hid her hands under the table so that he shouldn't see they were trembling. She wanted the truth from him now, no vaguely comforting generalities, and if she betrayed her real feelings, these were what she would drive him back upon.

"Can you tell me," she asked after a little pause, "exactly how bad it is?"

He couldn't furnish details. He told her, though, that there couldn't be any doubt that her father's affairs were more involved than his summary of them to her made them appear. "He isn't a very good bookkeeper, of course; never was; and he has never taken remonstrances very seriously. Why, about all I know is that Martin Whitney, who is his financial father confessor, is worried. He tried to dissuade John from going in anywhere near so heavily on the Hickory Hill project. And that, of course, was before we had any reason to suppose that his ability to earn money was going to be——"

It was apparent that he discarded the word that came to his tongue here, and cast about for another. "— interfered with," was what he finally hit upon. "Then he's your aunt's trustee, and I believe that complicates the situation, though just how much I don't know. Rush didn't get a letter from Martin this morning, did he?"

"I don't know," Mary said numbly.

"I thought perhaps," he explained, "that that might be the reason why you didn't want to go to their house to-night. Rush doesn't quite understand Martin's position nor do justice to it. Martin wants to have a really thorough talk with him, I know, as soon as possible."

"Wallace," Mary asked, after another little silence, "what was the word you didn't say when you spoke of Father's earning power being—interfered with? Was—it

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'cut off'? Do you mean that father isn't—ever going to be well?"

Startled as he was, he did not attempt a total denial; answered her, though with an effort, candidly.

"It's not hopeless at all," he assured her. "It really is not. If he'll rest, live an out-of-door life for the next year or two, he has a good chance to become a well man again. It's probable that he will—practically so. But if he attempts to take up his practice again in the autumn, it will simply be, so Darby declares, suicide."

"That means tuberculosis, I suppose," she said.

He nodded, then involuntarily he reached his hands out toward her, a gesture rare with him, and eloquent equally of sympathy and consternation. He hadn't in the least meant to tell her all that—nor, indeed, any of it. Her hands met his with a warm momentary pressure and then withdrew. He had, for a fact, pretty well forgotten where they were.

"If you knew," she said, "how kind you've been not to try to—spare me. No, don't bother. I'm not going to cry. Just give me a minute——"

It was less than that before she asked, in a tone reassuringly steady: "Does Father know himself?"

"He's been warned, but he's skeptical. Steinmetz says there's nothing surprising about that. It's his all but universal experience with men of his own profession. Of course this summer out at Hickory Hill is so much to the good. And if he can get sufficiently interested to stay there the year round, why, there's no knowing. The investment in that farm may prove the wisest one that he ever made."

"If it were only possible," she was quoting what her father had said to her the other night at High Forest, "for him to be whole-heartedly there. And he could be, for it's a place one can't help loving, and he and Rush are wonderful companions—he *could* be whole-heartedly there if it weren't for Paula."

IT WAS precisely at this point, he indicated to her, that Paula would come in, by relieving him of the necessity of getting back into practice. Martin would look out for the fixed indebtedness on the farm. He would probably be willing, in case John made it his home and put his own mature judgment at the disposal of the two young partners, to finance still further increases in the investment. But for the ordinary expenses of living the next year or two, Paula should cease being a burden and become a support. "Do you think," he finished by asking, "that she has any idea what the situation really is?"

Mary replied to this question a little absently. "Father insisted that she carry out the High Forest contract. She told me that herself and seemed, I don't know why, just a little resentful about it. But I'm sure she can't have any idea that there was a need for money at the back of it. It has irritated her rather, whenever she has caught me economizing up there at High Forest. And Father will never tell her any more pointedly than he has, you can be sure of that. Some one of us will have to do it."

"You're on very good terms with her, aren't you?" Wallace asked. He added instantly, though with an effort: "I'd be willing to tell her if you wish me to."

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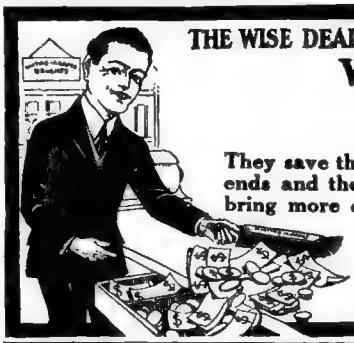

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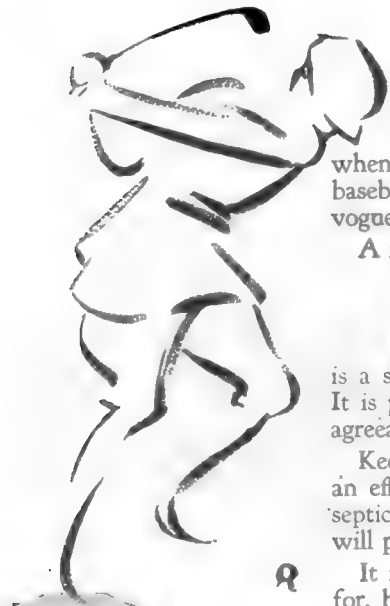

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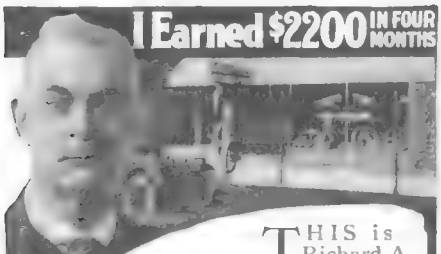

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She smiled very faintly at that, for she knew how terrifying such a prospect would be to him. "Whoever told Paula," she said, "she'd eventually attribute it, I think, back to me. So I may as well, and rather better, do it directly."

The tension slackened between them for a while after that. The talk became casual. Wallace, it was easy to see, was enormously relieved. Mary had been put in unreserved possession of the facts, and had endured them better than he could possibly have hoped. He began chatting about the farm again, not now as an incubus, but as a hopeful possibility. Both the boys had real mettle in them, and might be expected to buckle down and show it. Rush would forget the disillusionment of the holiday hopes with which he had begun the enterprise when the necessities of the case were really brought home to him. And as for Graham—

Wallace broke off short there, flushed, and made a rather panicky effort to retrieve the slip. Mary could have finished the sentence for him, of course, in almost his own words. He was in the family enough to be a part of the Graham conspiracy. Poor Graham, distracted by her innocent inability to make up her mind to marry him! He would be all right as soon as her maidenly hesitations should have come to an end, and she'd made him the happiest man in the world with the almost inevitable yes.

She had gone rather white by the end of a long silence. Finally—

"Wallace," she began, in a tone so tense that he waited breathlessly for her to go on, "do you remember I asked you once, the day I came home from New York, if you couldn't find me a job? I know you didn't think I meant it, and I did not altogether, then, but I mean it now. I need it—desperately. Wallace, I can't ever marry Graham. I know I can't. And I can't go on being dependent on Father while he's dependent on Paula."

HE HAD been staring at her in deepening consternation. Now he caught at a straw. "Paula is very fond of you," he said.

"Yes, in a way," Mary agreed; "though she sometimes has regarded me a little dubiously. But if she ever saw me—coming between her and Father, or Father turned ever so little away from her—toward me, whether it was any of my doing or not, she'd hate me with her whole heart. That's what she'll do after—this. It may not be very logical, but it's true."

Then she brought him back from the digression. "Anyhow, it's on my own account, not Paula's—nor even Father's—that I want a job. Father will feel about it, of course, as you do, and so will Rush and the rest. And I don't want it to hurt anybody more than necessary. I'd rather stay here, but I suppose on their account I'd better go away. And you know so many people—in so many places. There's your sister in Omaha. I remember how much trouble you said she had finding a nursery governess. I'd be pretty good at it, I think. I could teach French pretty well, and I'd be nice to children."

For a moment she wildly thought she had won him. She saw the tears come into his eyes.

"Anything I have in the world, my dear, or anything I can command is yours. On any terms you like."

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But there he disposed of the tears and got himself together, as if he'd remembered some warning. She could imagine Rush over the telephone, "Of course, she's terribly run down with that damned war work of hers; not quite her real self, you know."

She saw him summon a resolute smile, and heard the familiar note of a kindly encouragement in his voice. "We'll think about it," he told her. "After all, things aren't, probably, as black as they look. And sometimes when they look darkest, it's only the sign that they're about to change their faces altogether. Anyhow, we've stared at them long enough to-night, haven't we? And all I meant was to take you out for a jolly evening. Don't you think we might save it, even yet? Is there anything at the theatres you'd like to see?"

"Some musical show?" she asked. "Yes, I'd like that very much. Thank you."

The next instalment of ***"Mary Wollaston"*** *will appear in the June number.*

The Blue-Eyed Grass

By Muna Lee

IN THE old garden where roses grew
And foxglove spires stood tall,
I found a clump of blue-eyed grass
Blossoming by the wall.

I was five years old and loved the garden
Whose formal flowers I knew;
But it touched my heart with rapture and wonder,
This grass that blossomed blue.

Summer by summer has blossomed about me;
Flower by flower the seasons pass;
But I am five years old in a gray-walled garden
When I see the blue-eyed grass.

Minstrel Wind

By Daniel Henderson

WHERE the pines and hemlocks grow
Minstrel wind brought out his bow
And made each trembling bough a string
For lilts and madrigals of spring!

He blent into his soughing strain
The patter and drip of April rain!
He told how a rivulet would slip
Away from winter's weary grip!
How he would give dead leaves a whirl
And find the arbutus' pink and pearl!
He prophesied the lyric gush
Of wren and cardinal and thrush!
He mocked a bee swarm buzzing forth,
The clang of wild geese wedging north,
The croak of toads on a lily-pond's edge,
A humming-bird awhir in the hedge!

He sang a song of farmers sowing,
Of green grass growing! O, green grass growing!
And I, who listened in mist and mud,
Tripped along with my heart in bud.

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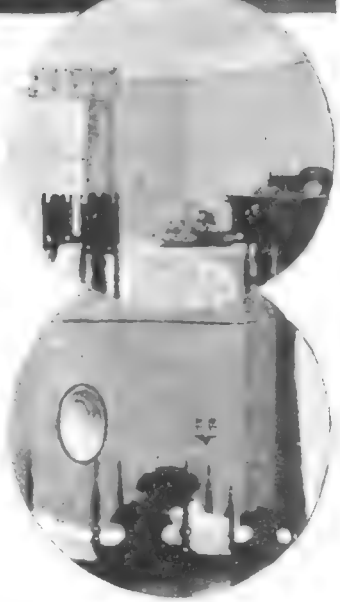

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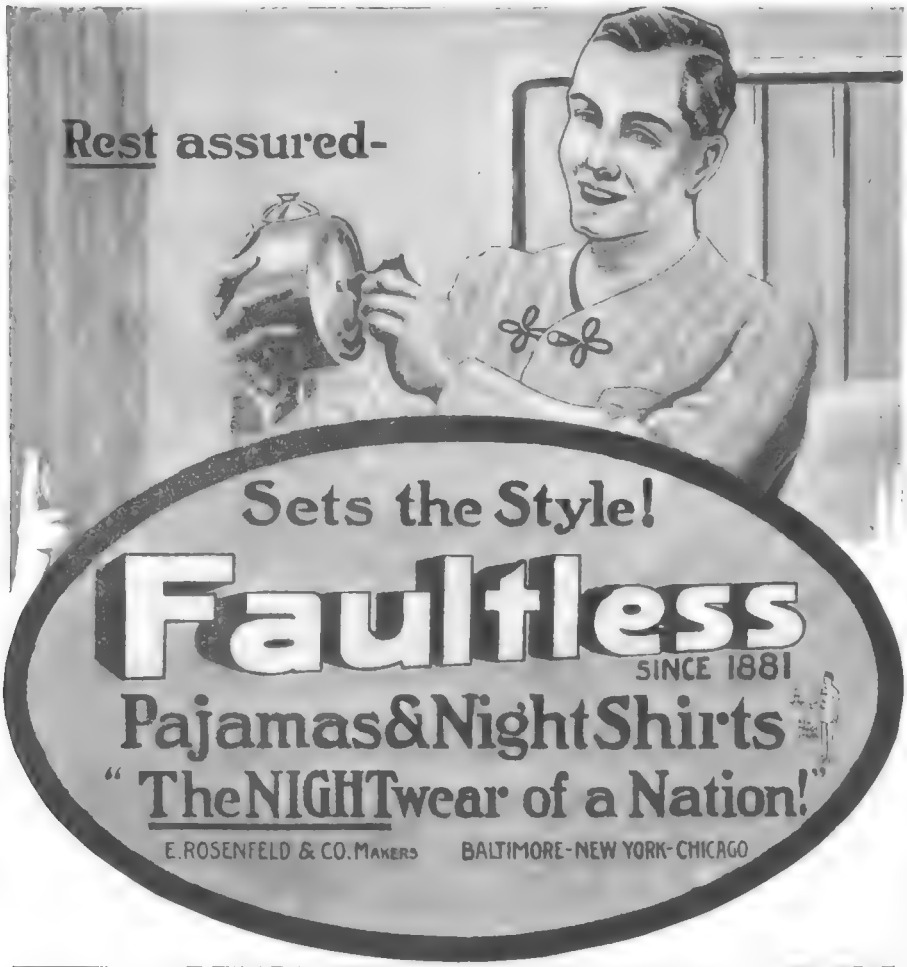

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All News-stands **Adventure** **Twice a month**

WHEN YOU SEE THE BATTLE-FIELDS

(*Continued from page 58*)

I resolved to discover for myself *all* that I could learn about one small corner of the battle-ground: to find what the roads and the trees and the creeks and the swamps and the hills and the hollows, the ditches and the great trenches and the crosses and battle remnants had to tell to one who really tried to read the battle-story in them.

Recognizing the Marks

"ISN'T that the monument?" I asked.

"Good God, so it is!" exclaimed the colonel. It was an ancient landmark.

"There's where those twenty men lay dying when we couldn't get them into the ditch out of machine-gun fire," said Sam, the colonel's orderly.

I didn't look at the monument or at the ditch. I watched the colonel and his orderly, Sam, in the front seat of the car, with the driver, bobbing up and down in his excitement. You wouldn't have thought, to see him then, that he, single-handed, had been cool-headed and brave enough to take eighteen German prisoners from a dug-out by simply making a balk motion with a hand-grenade. The colonel sitting beside me in the rear seat, was not now the cool-headed H. S. Howland, famous in the American Army for his Moro fighting in the Philippines, hero of Vauquois Hill, and recipient of most of the honors that the American and French armies have to give. There was no need for being cool-headed now. He was like a boy in his excitement. These two excited men were my tourist link with the great battle.

If every American of the hundreds of thousands who will soon come here, could tour the great battle-field of the Meuse-Argonne drive as I was touring this one small sector of it, with the men who had fought on the ground over which we were passing, they would gain an idea of the greatness of the fight that no books or writing could ever convey. I had come out to the battle-field with Colonel Howland and his orderly, hoping that they would give me what I had missed in all my touring of this greatest American battle-field: the sense of the majesty and awfulness of what had occurred in those days between September twenty-sixth and November eleventh.

My mind, as I have explained, hadn't clutched with what I saw. The millions of Americans who will visit these scenes in years to come will find that their minds do not clutch either. I had seen ruined towns, and shattered forests, and churned earth, but I had not been able to people them with out fighting doughboys. I had looked and looked and looked, and summoned my imagination time and again to get it to tell me the story of what I was beholding. And here I was on the scene, with the man who had taken five square miles of the land from the Germans. In the midst of that first day's fighting, after he had led his men for five hours with his right hand shattered by a machine-gun bullet, he had been taken off to a hospital.

Now, seven months later to the day, he had come back to the battle-field for the first time. For hours beforehand, as we approached the scene, he had told me the

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details of the fighting, mentioning all the landmarks as he remembered them from his excited impressions.

When I saw a monument by the roadside, an ancient, mossy relic of other days, I recognized it from his previous description.

We drove up to the little monument in the fork in the roads. The colonel and Sam jumped out, in their excitement.

"There's the ditch where we were hiding those three hours until the tanks came," shouted Sam.

"That's it! That's it!" exclaimed the colonel.

It was a ditch that any tourist would have sped past without notice.

"But where's the other ditch?" said the colonel. "You remember—the ditch in which all those men were wounded?"

"It was right here," said Sam, running across the point between the roads.

"Why, it's all filled up!" exclaimed the colonel.

Every Inch Sacred

SO IT was; filled up with new earth.

"They're changing things around here already," said the colonel.

Sam reached down and picked up a rubber glove, such as surgeons use.

"Ugh!" exclaimed the colonel. "Throw it away. The grave-diggers must have left that. I see what happened. The men who came behind us buried our boys in the ditch where they were killed, after we had charged down the road. And now the bodies have been moved to the cemetery at Romagne."

We walked over to the little monument.

"I remember I looked out of the ditch and counted twenty men lying around that monument. They were only thirty feet away, but the machine-gun bullets were flying like hail," said Sam.

"Yes, it was jumping across that space to the other ditch over there that I got hit in the hand," said the colonel. His hand still hung useless by his side. "God! How I was praying for those tanks to come that day. And at last, after three hours, when our ditches had as many dead and wounded men in them as live ones, I heard the tanks coming along that road."

He pointed to the road on our left.

"I saw their tops coming right along there," he said. "They made a terrific noise, but we were glad to hear them."

Now I was getting what I wanted; what every American who tours this great battle-field in years to come will want but can not have, in full detail—the story of what the roads and trees and broken houses and shell-holes had been trying to tell me of the horror and the glory of that American battle.

Every square inch of this five square miles was sacred to these two men. And the battle-field, remember, contains 480 square miles. As they told their story, in shouts and exclamations, I realized fully what I had only surmised before: that the millions of Americans who will come hereafter to tour these sacred square miles will not be able to glean more than a tiny part of the great thing. I realized that thousands of speeding automobiles carrying thrilled Americans would, in the years to come, whirl through this battle-field land, carrying their occupants over the dumb earth that has great stories to tell but that can not speak.

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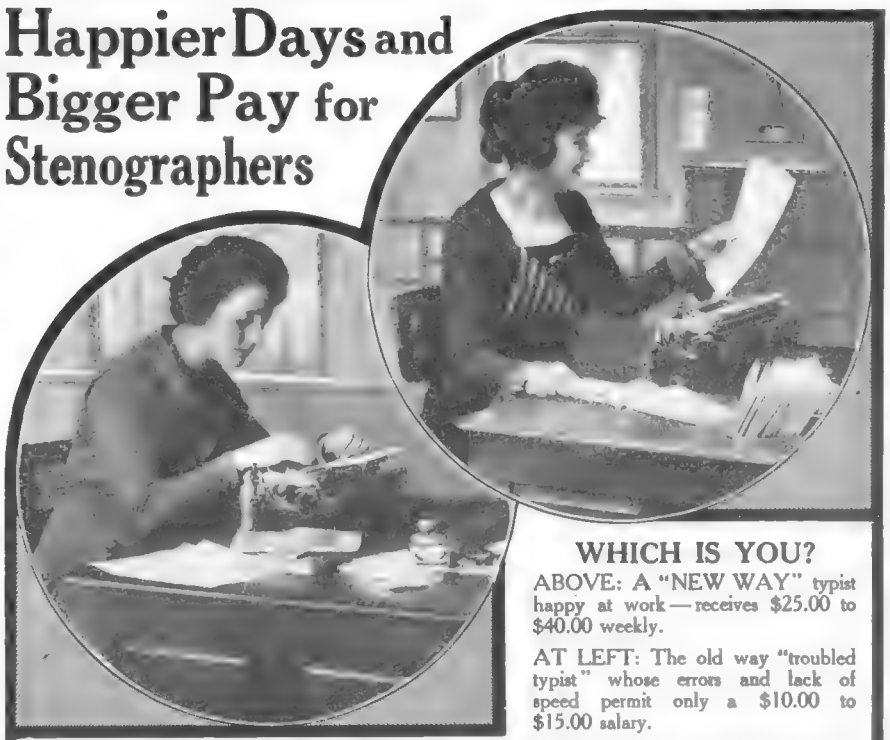

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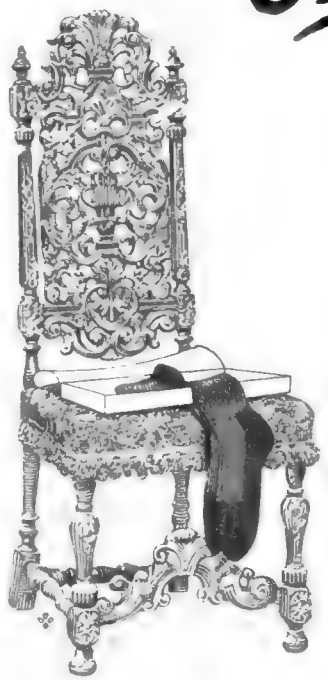

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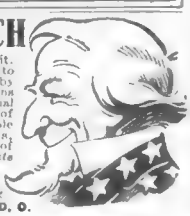

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"Let's go back to the jumping-off place and follow the battle right through," suggested the colonel.

Two miles farther back we came to a hill. We climbed it, to find on its rear face a mass of dugouts; well built, concrete houses, with porches and fences and other signs of comfort, which the French had erected during their four years of occupancy of the place.

There was a comfortable rustic seat built around a tree.

Colonel Howland, after our hard climb, sat on it.

"Remember the last time you sat in that place, sir?" asked Sam, the orderly.

"Yes, I do," said the colonel. "You can't forget a thing like that."

"When was the last time, Colonel?" I asked.

"It was the night of September twenty-fifth. It was a beautiful moonlit night too. All the officers of the 139th Regiment of the Thirty-fifth Division gathered around me here while I, as their colonel, told them what was expected of them at five o'clock the next morning. I sat here, and they stood all around me, out there," he said, pointing to the open space around the tree.

"How many of them are dead now, sir?" asked Sam.

"Fourteen out of thirty-seven," said the colonel.

"I remember one of the boys was killed while he was standing beside a tree over there. We buried him on the spot," said Sam. "His grave must be here yet."

It was only one grave out of the thousands, but it was a grave that we might know something about. That was the point.

Off in the woods we found it, a rough cross over it, and on the cross the top of a tin can on which the boy's name was scratched. He came from St. Louis.

Sam told us all about how the shrapnel shell had sent everybody scurrying; how when the smoke had cleared away, they had found this boy dead. How they had wrapped him in a blanket, carried the body into the woods, dug the grave and placed the body in it, deep, but hurriedly.

Paths Have Stories

AND Sam's story, as I listened to it, made all the crosses I have ever seen on that battle-field take on a new meaning. Here was only one grave out of the twenty-six thousand on this field. But the simple story of this one grave alone was big enough to thrill us. We couldn't have endured the sorrow of listening to the story of every other one of the thousands of graves. But I learned then that any cross means more than I had ever before felt it to mean, in my hurried rushing about the battle-fields.

And then Colonel Howland told of things that sent thrills of pride up and down my spine. They were things that happened on that hill that moonlight night among those American boys from St. Louis—it happened to be that I picked St. Louis, hit-or-miss—that every American ought to know. The same things had happened everywhere else, in all that sixteen miles of front, just before the great jump-off, but these things about the St. Louis doughboys were things that I could know personally, for myself, at first hand. It was only an ordinary little hill, with shattered trees on it and dugouts

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on the side away from the enemy. I had passed it by without giving it a second thought in my previous tours. But now it began to mean something to me.

"It was a moonlight night. We came up through the woods about ten o'clock. The French were up here. They had been here for four years. God! But they were glad to see us. I tried to get the boys to stretch out and get some sleep. We didn't have to charge until five in the morning. But the night was too beautiful. There was too much excitement. The sky was filled with white signal lights. There were flashes of artillery everywhere.

"The boys played and joked and wrote letters and talked and did everything that young fellows will do in excitement. I went into that dugout over there and tried to sleep; but I was like the boys. I couldn't sleep; I couldn't even keep my eyes closed. So I went out and walked around and listened to the men to see whether they were nervous and disturbed or whether their pep was high. Believe me, it was high. They were like boys going into a football game. This might have been the dressing-room under the Yale grand-stand.

"At a certain hour the barrage began from behind us. We all got excited then. The men all began to gather on that edge of the hill. Somehow they had discovered that they were to go down on to the level ground below from that side of the hill through the trees.

"Come over here and I'll show you the paths they followed."

We walked over the edge.

"They went right down through this grove," said the colonel. "I stood up here. As they passed me, the whole two thousand of them waved.

"'Don't worry, Colonel,' they said, 'we'll get 'em. We'll dig 'em out. It's Berlin this time, for sure.' 'Go to it,' I told them. 'I'll be with you while you're doing it.'

One Heroic Story

"AND so I saw them go down through the trees into a fog that covered the lowland. I started about twenty minutes after they had got under way, with my headquarters company, about thirty men, who carried our records and our telephones and the things we would need when I established a new post of command.

"Come on down this path," said the colonel. "This was the way I went down that morning."

We scrambled down the path through the underbrush. It was the first time the colonel's feet had touched this ground since that morning of death and glory seven months before.

"Now, down here, at the foot of the path, a German machine gun got somebody. I saw the medical corps men working with somebody as I went by, but I didn't have time to stop."

The colonel's memory was good. At the foot of the path, where it led into the open, were two crosses.

"Yes," said the colonel, "I was right. The Germans let off a machine-gun blast through the fog, though they couldn't see us, and probably didn't know what we were planning, and got these two men."

"Here's one of their canteens!" suddenly exclaimed Sam.

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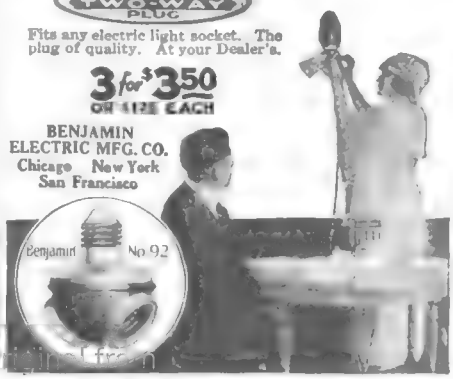

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I had seen, I venture to say, ten thousand mangled aluminum bottles on this field, but never a one of them told me a story like the bullet-riddled canteen which Sam held up to our view. Beside it we found the St. Louis boy's gas-mask. It, too, had been riddled. I was getting a story that every inch of this battle-field has to tell. At last the stories of gas-masks, the thousands of steel hats in the fields, the scattered canteens, the discarded rifles, began to tell themselves to me.

"I went along this road," said the colonel. "Let's follow it." We swung along a poorly made road that ran through a piece of swamp.

"The fog was so thick that I couldn't find my battalions. I had lost them. They must have gone over across the road into that field. We pushed on along this road for a piece and then we met about a dozen Americans who were lost in the fog. I asked them where they belonged, and they said they were Ninety-first Division men. They were miles out of their way, but they were going toward the enemy, nevertheless. I told them to join in with my little crowd, and they did."

A Belated Worry

SUDDENLY the colonel turned to a hill on our left.

I give it here, as truth, that his face turned white.

"I must have passed within one hundred and fifty yards of the fortification of Vauquois Hill. If it hadn't been for the fog, we'd have been wiped out with machine guns in a jiffy!" he exclaimed.

It was true. Here was the road he had taken; there were the front-line German trenches, not much farther than a city block distant. And Vauquois Hill was one of the finest fortifications in all the German zone.

"The fog saved us!" exclaimed the colonel. "Why, I had heard about Vauquois Hill ever since the war began, and if I had known we were as near it as that, I'd have—well, it was the valor of ignorance."

We soon passed along the road so that we could see the rear of Vauquois Hill. It is a high hill, rising like a butte from the lowland. Its top had been blown off by mines. It was honeycombed with tunnels. In it, buried at its very heart, the American salvage men found a great pumping station. Ten thousand Germans used to lie in those tunnels breathing in the fresh air pumped from outside, waiting throughout three years for the French to charge.

And on this morning, in the fog, an American colonel, lost from his battalions, with only forty men, walked past it as safely as a man going down Broadway.

The colonel said a great many things as we stood in the road, looking up at the mouths of the German tunnels. He was astonished at the sight. He had never seen it before. And yet it was he and his men who took Vauquois Hill. They took it by cutting off communications behind it. At last I was moved to say:

"Colonel, are you beginning to worry about that battle?"

He laughed quietly and said simply: "The valor of ignorance."

We trudged along a muddy mile of road, a mile like any other mile of the

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hundreds of miles of road in the Meuse-Argonne, but these two men had some story to tell for every hundred feet of it. I had passed along this same road two weeks before, interested in the wreckage of battle, but missing all the secrets.

"And right along here," said the colonel, "we met some more stray soldiers from another regiment. They were lost in the fog, too. They joined in with us and pretty soon, by picking up strays, I had about one hundred and fifty men with me. We stuck to this road because I knew it would lead us to Cheppy and I had promised my two battalions that I would meet them on the outskirts of Cheppy. I didn't know where the battalions were. The fog had swallowed them. But it was our job to get to Cheppy."

"Now I recognize this place," said Sam. "Here's where we heard the first machine-gun bullets whistling."

"Yes! Yes!" exclaimed the colonel. "They came from right over in there," he pointed to a near-by slope.

"And here's where we met the German prisoners!" exclaimed Sam.

"Yes. Let me tell you about that," said the colonel, turning to me. "Right here, on this road, we met a dozen German prisoners coming back toward our lines. I stopped them and sat down on that hump beside the road. I was sitting just like this," he said, as he placed himself on a small mound of earth beside the road. "And the German officer, who could talk English, was standing right there, in front of me.

"I was asking him about the strength of the forces in front of us when suddenly, right back there, about a block away, a German artillery barrage began to fall.

" 'Where are those shells coming from?' I asked him.

"He mentioned the name of a little town about three miles away. We found out afterward that he hadn't lied to us.

" 'And where is this machine-gun fire coming from?'

" 'From that piece of rolling ground over there.'

" 'What's over there behind that rolling ground?'

" 'Why, that's the Hindenburg line,' said the German."

The colonel stopped speaking. Sam had nothing to say, neither had I. We were thinking of that thrilling minute the colonel had reconstructed for us.

Caves Made Cowards

WE LOOKED over to the slightly elevated ground—it was only six hundred feet distant—and wondered what was hidden behind that ridge.

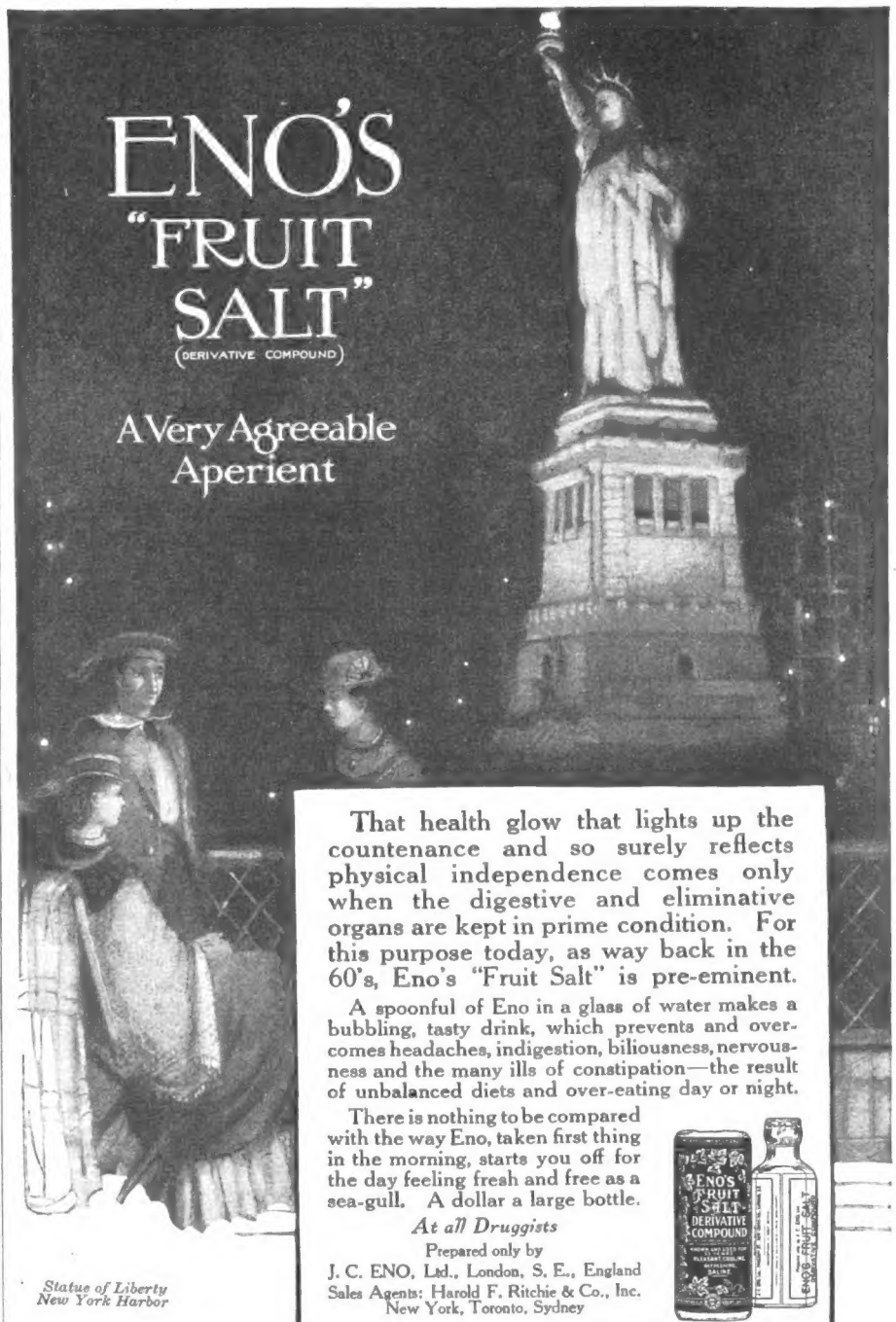
Sam broke the spell.

"Let's go over, sir," he said.

Within five minutes we were there.

We found a honeycombed hill. On the front side of it, toward where Colonel Howland and his men had been hiding in their ditches, was a strong trench. Steel machine-gun nests were still in position.

Leading from the trench down into the earth were tunnels. These tunnels, made of cement and steel, led back half a mile, under the hill, to the town of Cheppy. In order to reach these machine-gun nests the German soldiers had only to go into the tunnels from their inconceivably strong dugouts in Cheppy, pass half a mile through the electric-lighted passage-



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ways, and come up into the steel shelters from which they dealt out death.

"Why, these fellows were perfectly safe," said Sam. "They couldn't be hurt."

"Couldn't they?" said the colonel. "Why, you took eighteen of 'em yourself, didn't you?"

"Yes, but I mean we couldn't hit 'em. There wasn't anything for us to shoot at. Even our artillery couldn't reach 'em down here in the ground."

And then Colonel Howland said a thing which came from the very heart of his fighting experience:

"They were too much protected, I think. They had so much security that they turned coward."

I want to get this thought down here, in passing. I saw miles of the Hindenburg line, after this experience with Colonel Howland, just as millions of American tourists will see it. It will last for years. I traced it through villages, where the shelters were built of concrete and steel, with steel roofs three feet thick. I traced it through farmland of France, where it was all underground, a vast system of mining, and through forests, where it consisted of great caves dug in the sides of ravines. Everywhere it gave security to the German soldier and a sense of safety. A sense of security is a damning thing for a soldier, unless it is a security that he has won by his own arms. In that great battle-field of the Meuse-Argonne you will see a million little holes, dug by American doughboys, each man making his own knee-deep hole; everywhere, also, you will see the mouths of the great German shelters. Our boys fought out in the open, because they were forced to. The Germans fought from their shelters. And when they found that the Americans had got in behind them and cut them off from their army, they came out of their caves and mines and tunnels, like a pest of flooded rats, and surrendered without shame.

The Tank Horror

IT WAS late in the afternoon, in the little town of Cheppy, which Colonel Howland took that morning of September twenty-six, after breaking the Hindenburg line, that Sam came to me and said quietly:

"Mr. Shepherd, I wish you'd try to get the colonel to go away from here."

His face was drawn and pale.

"Well," he hesitated, as I looked at him in surprise, "it's too awful for me. I didn't notice it so much when we were fighting, but it all comes back now. It's too damn awful for me. I wouldn't come here again for a million dollars and I wish the colonel'd go."

"All right," I answered, "I'll suggest it."

"I just thought of one certain thing that happened that morning," said Sam. "It was the tanks."

"Yes," I said.

"Well, you know how I told you there were about twenty or twenty-five wounded or dead men lying out in the road?"

"Yes."

"Well, when those tanks came, we all got in along beside them and started to fight our way toward Cheppy here. The machine-gun fire from those trenches up there was too hot for us to stop for anything. And those tanks——"

"Yes," I said.

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Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Well, you see, they couldn't stop. So they had to run over our own men who were lying in the road."

"The wounded ones, too?"

"Of course," said Sam. "Couldn't stop for anything. We had to take Cheppy. And we couldn't lose a tank. God! I hoped I'd never remember that again and now it's all come back. I remember seeing it happen as I ran along beside the tanks, but I'd close my eyes and go ahead."

Sam was only repeating a common story of the tanks, a story the censor used always to kill.

The colonel, who had been rummaging around the solitary ruins, came up to us.

"Well," I said, as lightly as possible, "suppose we call it a day?"

He agreed, and we climbed into the car that had followed us on our two-mile tramp.

Twelve hours later, after a night's sleep in a battle-field ruin, we were speeding through the Argonne Forest back toward Paris.

Your Home-Town Story

WE CAME to the first little town that had been untouched by shells. Little shops were open. Civilians were in the streets. The church bells were ringing. It was Sunday morning.

"God, isn't this fine!" said the colonel, with a deep sigh of content. "Look at that little beauty there, going to church!" He pointed out a fluffy little maiden, of perhaps six years, who was hippety-hopping her way down the village street.

"That's what men have to die for, sometimes," he added.

Neither the colonel nor Sam wants to go back to the battle-field again. They tell me so. Not one of our six hundred thousand boys who fought there would find it a comfortable experience.

It is well for the tourist that he can not know all the stories this field of honor has to tell.

But it is well he should realize that every square foot of all these square miles has been sanctified by suffering and sacrifice. And he should realize that the supreme thing for him to understand is not what happened to bodies of men, but what happened to their minds, hearts and souls as they fought for God and the right.

And the best way to get this realization is to go to the battle-field with at least one story—preferably the story of the boys of your own home town—worked out so definitely in your own mind that you will recognize the scene when you come across it and will be able to understand the story which every inch of the ground has to tell you.

Mountain Trail

By Mary Carolyn Davies

THROUGH tangling root and underbrush,
Through cliff and rock and soil and sod,
A man has built for other men
A little, winding road to God

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